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JIMMY GLOVER

HIS BOOK

BY

JAMES M. GLOVER

MASTER OF MUSIC AT DRURY LANE THEATRE

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TO
MY WIFE
KATHLEEN

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JIMMY GLOVER—HIS BOOK

CHAPTER I

My first public appearance—In the Dock—Castigation by a Cardinal—Kissed by a great *prima donna*—Apprenticed to a chemist—Early acquaintance with Fenianism—I become a Church organist—And theatrical runner—"The Professor," my grandfather—Editor of "Moore's Irish Melodies"—My Dock appearance as a vocalist—Briefing "The Interpreter"—Sentence—"The Meeting of the Waters"—Early Italian opera associations with Colonel Mapleson Senior—Dublin gallery riots—The old *prima donna* rivalries: Operatic Masses—"Elijah" sung by the great operatic stars of the 'Seventies—Mapleson's tricks to shorten operas—and railway fares—Henry Irving and Barry Sullivan—John Harris—Michael and John Gunn—The "drowned" omnibus—"Willie O'Brien, the 'Freeman' reporter"—Tom Sexton—First public appearances of Oscar and Willie Wilde—Willie Wilde's "Daily Telegraph" method—An illustration—Sir William Wilde—Oscar and "The Poet and the Puppets"—"*Vert-Vert*" and Dick Mansel—The Mansel family—"The Gaiety Girl"—Jimmy Davis and his "Bat" experiences—How to publish a "warm" story—The Right Hon. W. H. Smith, Chancellor of the Exchequer and "Newsvendor."

I MADE my first public appearance, *vide* the baptismal registry in the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin, on June 18th, 1861, the date of this event synchronizing with the anniversary of another great happening—the Battle of Waterloo. My second notable performance was seven years later in the dock of the County Cavan Assizes Court. On each occasion domestic history, always flattering,

recounts that I was a "great success"; but my second advent was even greater than my first, because it more or less decided my future career--one of unusual variety, considering that before I was twelve years of age I could boast that I had been thrashed by a real live Cardinal, and kissed by a real live Italian opera *prima donna*.

The first experience I underwent at the hands of the late Cardinal MacCabe, during his Kingstown Canonry, the second at the lips of the late Madame Theresa Tietjens. The cane of theology fell on a certain part of my *corpus* like water on a duck's back, although, to be strictly accurate, I was in the process anatomically less favoured than the duck. The kiss of Music ruined me. I had the misfortune to be born of a musical family. My grandfather, Professor Glover, was organist at Marlborough Street Pro-Cathedral and a prominent teacher of music, my mother occupying a like position at another Church--Mount Argus my father combining the duties of a commercial traveller, six days a week--after his political debacle in 1868--with that of a Church vocalist on the seventh day, as *basso profundo* in Whitefriars Street Church. Two of my aunts were harpists, a third was a soprano vocalist of eminence, and I had two grand-aunts, over seventy years of age each, who gave music-lessons from eight in the morning till eight at night.

Of course, it was only natural that, possessed of the required facilities for a favourable musical career, every effort should be made to turn my mind to something else, and in this great negative movement for my social advancement my father led the van with eminent but only temporary success, for at a time when I was deputy-organist at two Churches with artistic qualifications of no mean merit, he succeeded by a masterstroke of commercial ingenuity in apprenticing me for three years to a druggist for ten hours a day at a weekly wage of four shillings. "Bottle-washing," my grandfather said--and bottle-washing it undoubtedly meant--to the end, had I adhered to

my father's wishes—but such was not to be the case.

The first notoriety I came in contact with was P. J. Tynan, the famous "No. 1." Tynan was a sort of newsvendor-stationer on the shores near Dublin, and I was one of three small boys who with a nurse worried his stock-in-trade every afternoon. I was too young at the time to appreciate anything political brewing (however amplified as I grew older), but I gathered sufficient knowledge to know that my father's attendance at various secret Fenian meetings gave my mother much thought and worry. As a boy, I often accompanied him, and I can vividly remember two midnight funerals—done in the dark, to prevent the mourners from being recognized as suspects; and that I attended "*en plein air*" the obsequies of John Mitchell, Sergeant McCarthy, and John Martin. Consequently to wake up one morning and find a posse of "horneys," as policemen were then described in Dublin, surrounding our private residence at Sandycove, caused no excitement in my mind till my father was subsequently arrested and "jailed" (owing to Mr. Gladstone's suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, 1866), without trial or enquiry of any kind. This latter incident is in connection with a happening referred to later on.

This all brought me to the earliest possible time that I remember earning my own living, or, as my grandfather tersely put it, "doing something to keep me out of the workhouse."

Thus it came about that on many occasions I played the early service at the Pro-Cathedral in the morning, sold senna and salts till 6 p.m. at Cornelius Mannin's, the Dublin druggist's, played another service in the evening at my mother's Church, St. Michael's, in Kingstown, or at Mount Argus, which I left later on for the then greatest honour of all—in my view—to carry the red fire which, as a chemist, I had made in the daytime, to the property-man at the local Theatre Royal. It will be noticed that in my early existence the Church and the Stage were amalgamated. In fact,

it was owing to my anxiety to "scamp" the Benediction service at Kingstown for fear that I should miss the train and be late at the theatre, and disappoint the clown with his two pounds of red fire, that I was subjected to the castigation already referred to at the hands of the late Cardinal MacCabe, a gentleman, a great theologian, but an anti-Nationalist.

These few cursory remarks, as I have hinted, will serve to show that for a young gentleman turned eleven years of age I obtained very early experience of more or less entertaining incidents.

There was one person, however, who played a very important part in my early life, and to whom I owe my present position. It was he who taught me everything I know. It was he who, against my will, physically thrashed my musical education into my brain, who rescued me from the menial service of the druggist counter, and at his own expense, albeit contrary to my father's wishes, placed me in a position to earn my own living. Whether it be writing for the Press, the ability to speak several languages, my knowledge of the piano, the violin, or the organ; I owe it all to him, and I thank the Providence which enabled him to live to see some honourable fructification of his labours. This was my grandfather, John William Glover, "The Professor," the famous Irish composer and Editor of "Moore's Irish Melodies."

At certain fixed periods of the year it was Professor Glover's custom to prosecute short tours of the smaller towns in Ireland for the purpose of lecturing on National Music. These lectures were generally delivered in the local Town Hall, assembly rooms, lecture hall, or Court House. In the event of the latter place being used, he usually sat upon the Bench with an instrument in front of him called an "*orgue expressive*." This contrivance doubled up into an oblong-shaped box for travelling purposes, and on one occasion it was seized during one of the then frequent Fenian scares and my grandfather "held up" for two hours on the assumption that it contained firearms

—a polite attention of the Royal Irish Constabulary due to his relationship to my father, who at this time was really a marked man. The vocalist of the evening, if any at these "Soirées musicales," had to contribute his quota of the entertainment either from the witness-table or the dock. It was from the latter vantage that I made my second public appearance already referred to, for full of the family pride ever present on such occasions my grandfather announced that I would sing "The Meeting of the Waters." It was really a most important Pooli-Bah occasion. I commenced my evening's work by unpacking the luggage, taking out and fixing the organ, collecting the money at the doors, selling the programmes, books of words, etc., and then made my appearance between the first and second parts as "The Celebrated Young Boy Vocalist—Master Williams the Boy Mario." Of course my name wasn't "Williams" at all, but the old Composer wished to convey to the public the impression that he had brought a budding Mario, or Sims Reeves, from London especially for the occasion, and this impression would be entirely dispelled if I appeared as one of the family.

In the daytime I used to wander about these Assize Courts and pick up many a good story. It is well known that in the West of Ireland the real Gaelic is much spoken, and at the Assizes a genuine *impasse* arises in the cross-examination of many of the various prisoners, so much so that a prominent Q.C. then on the Galway Circuit told me one of his many experiences of this difficulty. He was standing on the doorstep of the Court one summer when he was accosted by Paddy Flanagan. "Begorra—Mister Murphy—it's meself that's glad to see ye; ye got me out of the last neck trouble and it's ini bruther is up this time for a hanging job. By the Virgin Mary he's innocent, but all the witnesses speak the Irish, and it's only yourself that knows the owld tongue." As a matter of fact the barrister in question was well in demand in Gaelic cases on account of his proficiency with the language. "I really cannot," he

replied, "I have a long civil case for the Midland Railway. "But you must, Mr Murphy, or mi bruther will get hanged," and so the gentle art of persuasion went on and the barrister equally as gently refused till in despair, unable to get rid of the importuner, he suggested that if the brief was sent to him he knew a young Gaelic scholar who had been "devilling" in his chambers who could do it just as well, and whom he would privately "read up" in the case. "Nay—nay, Misthur Murphy, Oi'll have none of that, it's yourself that can git mi bruther off," and off the supplicant went.

The barrister thought no more about the case till the next Assizes, when he once more encountered Paddy. "Well, my man, how did your brother get on?" was his tender enquiry from his old client. "Och—begorra, all right—he got off." "Off," said the barrister—quite pleased, "did you retain my young friend then?" "Sorra a retain." "Then who *did* you brief?" anxiously pressed the Q.C. "Oh, be Jabers, I briefed the interpruter."

Early associations with the musical world brought me later in touch with operatic and theatrical matters, and the old opera days of Colonel Mapleson *père* began at this time to make a deep impression on my youthful and theatrically inclined mind. Never were there such days—or nights. Tietjens, Ilma di Murska, Trebelli and her husband Bettini, Cotogni, Luigi Arditi and Li Calsi—two splendid *mæstri* of the old Italian school—the young George Perren, Signor Campobello (Mr Campbell) a Scotch basso with an Italianized name, Charles Santley, Wilfred Morgan—"My Sweetheart when a boy", who married Miss Morton, daughter of the late Charles Morton, the "Father of the Music Halls," "Mister" Foley from Cork, *i.e.* "Signor Foli": these were names to draw with in those days, and with such musical babies' milk was I nursed and my mind educated in the real school of good Opera.

Mapleson toured with a sort of "leader" chorus of Italians and other professionals of foreign kind.

In each town he could locally reinforce his troupe with twenty or thirty choir vocalists who knew the operas—musical enthusiasts all, thus saving a large amount in railway fares. One regrets this rough-and-ready way of forming an “ensemble,” but it had its virtues. Hardly any Dublin drawing-room was complete without a set of all the operatic works, and Dublin’s great musical taste was a natural sequence.

Then there existed various factions of the “Boys,” the “Tietjens,” the “Ilma di Murska,” and the “Sinico” tribes who, on “Magic Flute” or other “combined cast” nights, would all enter by the early doors to the top gallery, with large baskets of flowers suspended on ropes of roses, and at the proper time lower out the floral complimentary tributes—each to their particular favourites—with cries of “Dy Murska!” (Ilma di Murska) to be answered by counter-cries of “Tishens!” (Theresa Tietjens) or “Sinnyko!” (Madame Sinico). Mozart’s work was always chosen for the evenings of these displays of enthusiasm and temper, mainly on account of the three *prime donne* being in the cast on the same evening. Then there was the dragging of the carriages home, the unhorsing by willing volunteers, the showers of violets from enthusiasts standing by, the wreaths of roses presented by real music-struck admirers; and on Saturday nights, what fun to stand at the old Theatre Royal door and hear the shouts of “What Mass to-morrow?” “What Church to-morrow?” For all the artistes sang in one or other of the Catholic Churches on Sunday, and this replenished the poor-box. This also created rivalry among the Churches, all of which struggled for the better “programmes.”

Imagine it! A Mass service sung by Tietjens, Sinico, Santley, Vizzani, Cotogni, Trebelli, Bettini. They went either to the Pro-Cathedral, where my grandfather was organist, or to the Church in Kingstown where my mother was organist, or to Whitefriars Street, where Signor Alessandro Cellini, their brother Italian, was organist, and

where I was also a "deputy." A performance of "Elijah" one Sunday at St. Michael's at Kingstown gave my mother its music-directress, the full force of the "Grand Italian Opera Company" before mentioned, of whom the only survivors to this day are Charles Santley, whose recent fare well at Covent Garden professionally ended a great career, Administrator Fricker, now of Rathmines, and the present writer.

Another great amusement on Saturday nights was the often successful attempts of the gallery boys to frustrate Mapleson's ideas of economy in transit. The fares from Dublin to England on Sundays on special mail and boat rates were very expensive, as in those times the third-class service did no Sunday work. Now if Mapleson travelled 150 souls the difference to England in transit might mean anything from a pound to two pounds per head; so, finding that the local Tedcastle coal-boat with passenger traffic left on Saturday night at midnight, he usually chartered all its human freight power at six shillings a head to Liverpool, where they would arrive on Sunday mornings with the whole day before them for further transit across England. The poor Italian choristers and travelling band, mostly bad sailors, could not protest on their own account—but the "bhoys" in the gallery soon discovered the trick, for it meant instructions to the conductors, Li Calsi, or Luigi Arditi, to "cut" the performance—only sing or play one verse of everything and take no encores. In this way the patrons of the popular parts saw that they were getting "short weight" and action was soon decided upon.

Now the orchestral signal for "cutting" or going to the end of any musical number, is two taps on the desk from the Conductor's wand, called in the vernacular, "tapping for the coda" or end. So whether it was "Ah! Che la Morte," "Balén," The Soldiers' Chorus in "Faust," or other possibly to be encored popular item, the very moment that the "taps for coda" were heard there

would arise on Saturday nights a perfect hurricane of howls from the "gods," "Second vurse—y'll hav' to go back 'Looeegee' (this to Luigi Arditi)—this won't do," etc., till these delays nearly approximated the original length of the cut number. Mapleson afterwards told me that although he believed it was done first in all enthusiastic sincerity, he really found later on that this had become a carefully planned scheme by some of his Italian choristers, whose objection to *mal de mer* inclined them to the luxurious three-and-a-half hours mail-boat crossing on Sunday rather than the fourteen hours all-night coal-boat crossing on Saturday.

The reason for shortening the performance was so that the impresario could pack up his wardrobe effects and catch the boat, which steamed away at midnight; so later on he managed to make Saturday a "Combination" programme—finishing all the Chorus *ensemble* numbers by 10.30 p.m.

The arrival for two fortnightly seasons of a young actor from London, named Henry Irving, first raised the point as to Irish rivalry with the then idol of the "gods," Barry Sullivan, one of the old brigade of thundering Shakespearean ranters who used his bombastic bigotry to such an extent that on one occasion, when they brought on a throne for "Richard III." and the older actor queried its usefulness, the property-man, as though to settle the point, remarking, "It was all right for Misther Irving," was promptly ordered by Barry Sullivan to "then certainly take the da—d thing away immediately."

At this time, the Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, Dublin, was owned by Mr. John Harris. In Grafton Street were Gunn and Sons, the great Roman Catholic music publishers, and on the back part of their property was built the Gaiety Theatre, of which theatre the Gunns became lessees, and Harris, fearing opposition, put his Theatre Royal in the market, only to hear that the new tenants were his rivals, the Gunns. This preyed on his mind to such an extent that he grew morose. At the time he was stopping with a

mutual friend, John Riley, whose back-garden butted out on the sea at Glasthule, and one afternoon he went out, lay down on an island rock, and waited until the tide came in to do its homicidal work.

The Gunns were a very musical family; one played the "viola" in the various Philharmonic societies, and both sang in the Monkstown choir on Sunday. Cardinal (then only Canon) MacCabe took the opportunity of soundly trouncing them in the pulpit one Sunday on some supposed "indecent" posters announcing the arrival of "The Two Roses," a new play just then produced in London. They were the most innocent specimens of printing in the world, and the Canon's attack was quite gratuitous; but the two heads of the original ladies budding forth from the rose leaves lent themselves to indecorous treatment by the vicious mind which brought protests to the clergy and a more or less suggestive cartoon in a local "squib" was the means of the matter being brought finally to the Canon's notice.

One like the rose when June and July kiss;
 One like the young rosebud sweet May discloses.
 Sweetly unlike, and yet alike in this—
 They are—two Roses. J. A.

The two originals were Miss Amy Fawsitt and Miss Newton. Miss Newton was the wife of the still living, well-known actor, Tom Thorne. Apart from anything else, this production of "The Two Roses" is always associated with the first success of Sir Henry Irving in London as the original Digby Grant. James, or "Jimmy," Albergy, its author, who married the handsome Miss Mary Moore, rather pessimistically and erroneously wrote his own epitaph:

He slept beneath the moon,
 He basked beneath the sun,
 He lived a life of Going-to-do
 And died with nothing done.

Which, after everything is said, was not quite true.

Shortly after that, the Gunns, John and Michael, gave up these domestic duties, and after the death of the elder brother "Long John" (he was six feet four), Mr. Michael Gunn came to London, and for years threw in his lot with his friend, D'Oyly Carte, till "Mikado" time, I believe, when the arrangement was terminated. The Gunns' father met his death in a strange way. He used to travel to the office on a 'bus which crossed the Portobello canal bridge at Rathmines; the horses one morning took fright, and turned right down into the empty lock—'bus, passengers and all. "Begorra!" shouted the bewildered lock-keeper, "I'll save their lives by floating the 'bus," which he immediately proceeded to do by opening the sluices, filling the lock and drowning all the passengers.

It was during the management of John Harris at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, that the late Hortense Schneider—the great Offenbachian "Grande Duchesse"—came into contact with the then presiding Cardinalate of the Roman Catholic Church Paul, Cardinal Cullen, who had come to Dublin from Armagh, where he was Archbishop. Cullen was a schoolfellow of my grandfather, and he migrated to Rome after he was "called" and became a strong friend of Pius IX., the then Pope. His Italian education rather inclined him to regard with suspicion any movement of revolutionary character, and if only for this reason his descent on Dublin was looked upon by the Nationalist party with suspicion.

I served Mass with him dozens of times. He had a gentle nature, and encouraged the Italian florid style of music in Church service to such an extent that his own generosity recoiled on him, for, through certain protests from other quarters, Pope Pius IX. interfered, and he had to issue an edict enforcing a return to the St. Cecilian or more serious form of Church music now generally in use.

Of course, the wisdom of this may be more or less questioned. John Wesley is reputed to have spoken, "Why should the Devil have all the good!

tunes?" But perhaps the Dublin fashion in ecclesiastical music was going too far. At any rate, the "musical priest" became an important factor, and the melodies of the Italian operas were easily translatable into Latin words for Sunday consumption. The Church filled like a theatre on Boxing Night, and many converts were made; but jealousies arose, intimations to Rome, as I have hinted, ensued, and the closure before indicated arrived.

Many a time and oft have I as a boy buttoned on the layman collar to the priestly throat, and ciceroned Father Tom—or Father Pat—to a "rehearsal" (not "performance"—that was "interdit") of "Trovatore," "Traviata" or other operatic programme. On one occasion, I well remember, the priesthood were much concerned as to the first production in Italian of "Il Talismano," Balfe's swan-song, so to speak, when it was rumoured that the "Mass" was to be represented in the Church scene.

But back to the can-can and the Cardinal. During Lent, in those days, it was not thought "the thing" to go to the theatre, and so a casual visit during the forbidden period of a French Opera Bouffe Company supporting the great Hortense Schneider in Offenbach's opera, "The Grande Duchesse," into which the can-can was first introduced, was played for its first week to sparse audiences and almost empty benches. But some one had told his Eminence the Cardinal, and to the utter astonishment of us all—I was a handsome, chubby-faced, surpliced choir boy at the time—on a particular Sunday, the Cardinal ascended the pulpit, dramatically denounced, in a Lenten sermon, the can-can, and threatened us Roman Catholics with all the terrors of the "Index Expurgatorius" if we dared to visit the theatre till Lent had spent its forty days.

The result, as may easily be imagined, was packed houses at the theatre and empty pews at the Church.

Shades of "The Times" in the 'Seventies, when

the "moral" or "immoral" influence of a Drury Lane play, "Formosa," was the subject of a long discussion—letters which it was afterwards found were written anonymously by Dion Boucicault, the author of the play.

Poor old Cardinal Cullen! He was a sport, and many a good yarn is told of him in ecclesiastical circles. He at one time lived at the priest's house or presbytery, next door to the Marlborough Street Cathedral, and ordained that all priests, other than those on sick call leave, should be in house not later than 10 p.m. One night, in spite of all entreaties and protestations from the holy father on duty, he insisted himself on doing the janitor's work, having an idea that social attractions in Dublin—in which the priesthood always played a large part—were interfering with the discipline of his orders. So he sat behind the chained-up door waiting till the small hours for two late "birds" out roystering at a neighbouring parishioner's "at home." At 2 a.m. a gentle tap came to the door and a priestly head pushed through the small aperture left by the hanging chain. "Is old Paul gone to bed yet?" said the overdue priest of God. "No," replied Paul (the Cardinal), "he is here."

But in the morn—he never said a word.

At all the concerts which availed themselves of my mother's services my father generally admonished me "to look out for Willie O'Brien" (now Mr. W. O'Brien, M.P.), "the 'Freeman' reporter, and ask him to kindly mention your mother"—and if I could catch "Tom Sexton of the 'Nation'" it would be useful for a par. My grandfather always took the credit of introducing Tom Sexton, great Nationalist, great orator, ex-Lord Mayor of Dublin and generally fine fellow, to politics. He discovered him at Waterford, so he always boasted, and asked the then struggling journalist to come to Dublin and stop with us in Talbot Street; but when the future great Home Ruler Nationalist did come, we sent him to a Mrs. Miley's, at 4, Upper

Gloucester Street, where he had rooms on the first floor for years, and where all our family ultimately lived in the upper part for a long period. I must now publish an unreserved apology to Tom for the number of times I poured water into his boots, altered his nightly instructions to his landlady—he always left a note to be called at twelve (he was late at the office) and I generally made it six—rather inconvenient, as he seldom went to bed before 4 or 5 a.m.—and generally amused myself at his expense. But his kindly nature was never wanting, and paragraphs which I wrote about myself and my amateur club's dramatic performances, always received a kindly hospitality at his hands. It was years later that a raucous comedian on the stage at a time when I was conducting the band, made a contemptuous reference to my friend and Mr. Parnell the night these two politicians were first arrested in 1881. I immediately rushed to the dressing-room, protested in strong language, and received what I am told was an attempt at "an upper-cut"—the mark of which I bear to the present day—but the disfigurement really meant a flattening of my nasal ornament which for ever bears the mark of my loyalty to my friend, of which I am more or less proud.

Mr. Sexton's connection, after Isaac Butt's death, with the Home Rule movement, is now history; but one of his first public appearances in Dublin came about, I think, in rather a funny way. It had been decided to celebrate the centenary of the poet, Thomas Moore, the author of "Moore's Irish Melodies." The then Lord Mayor (Sir J. Barrington) lent the Mansion House for the inaugural meeting, to make the necessary arrangements. From this meeting my grandfather, who was the musical adviser to the ceremonies, returned in a fury, complaining of the interference of "that young vagabond"—Tom Sexton, and "two whipper-snappers," Willie and Oscar Wilde, the two sons of Sir William Wilde, the great oculist. The only cause for "offence" seemed to be that they had insisted on a better literary effort being

submitted for the Celebration "Ode," arguing that the one already written by Stephen Nolan Elrington to my grandfather's music was "not worthy of Ireland."

This, I think, was the occasion also of the first real public appearance of the late Oscar Wilde and his brother Willie—the latter a delightful, genial, brilliant Irishman, who left us too early in a life not too heavily burthened with the real, genuine Bohemian wits. I do not know any word-photograph of a man which is so true to nature as my friend A. M. Binstead's description of Willie in "Pitcher in Paradise," which I quote by his kind courtesy :—

"The best wit needs lamplight (says 'The Pitcher'), and no gentler humourist or more polished gentleman ever entertained the thoughtless patrons of the Spoofs (this was a night club in Maiden Lane, Strand, invented it is said by Arthur Roberts)—the gilt-edged fellows who dropped in to kill time with a buck rabbit, but eventually stayed on to spend a delightful evening—night after night than Willie Wilde. The personification of good nature and irresponsibility, Willie with ten thousand a year would have been magnificent: without other income, however, than that which his too indolent pen afforded, the poor fellow was frequently in straits which must have proved highly repugnant to his real frank and sunny disposition. No doubt his artistic inactivity was to some extent inherited . . . yet Willie loved (to talk of) his work and would charm the ears of the uninitiated with such soft south wind as: 'The journalistic life irksome? Dear me, not at all. Take my daily life as an example. I report at the office, let us say at twelve o'clock. To the Editor I say, "Good morning, my dear Le Sage," and he replies, "Good morning, my dear Wilde, have you an idea to-day?"' "Oh yes, Sir, indeed I have," I respond. "It is the anniversary of the penny postage stamp." "That is a delightful subject for a leader," cries my editor, beaming on me, "and would you be good enough,

my dear Wilde, to write us a leader, then, on the anniversary of the penny postage stamp?" "Indeed I will that with pleasure" is my answer. "Ah! thank you, my dear boy," cries my editor, "and be sure to have your copy in early—the earlier the better." That is the final injunction, and I bow myself out. I may then eat a few oysters and drink half a bottle of Chablis at Sweeting's, or alternatively partake of a light lunch at this admirable club, for as rare Ben Jonson says, "The first speech in my Cataline, spoken by Sylla's ghost, was writ after I had parted friends at the Devil Tavern. I drank well and had brave notions." I then stroll towards the Park. I bow to the fashionables, I am seen along incomparable Piccadilly. It is grand. But meantime I am thinking only of that penny postage stamp. I try to recall all that I ever heard about penny postage stamps. Let me see? There is Mr. So-and-so the inventor, there is the early opposition, the first postal legislation, then the way stamps are made, putting the holes in the paper; the gum on the back; the printing—all these details come back to me, then a paragraph or two about present postal laws; a few examples of the crude drolleries of the official postal guide perhaps as a conclusion, something about the crying need for cheaper Postal rates. I think of all the circumstances as I stroll back along Pall Mall. I might go to the British Museum and grub up a lot of musty facts, but that would be unworthy of a great leader writer, you may well understand that. And then comes the writing. Ah! here is where I earn my money. I repair to my club. I order out my ink and paper. I go to my room. I close the door. I am undisturbed for an hour. My pen moves. Ideas flow. The leader on the penny postage stamp is being evolved. Three great meaty, solid paragraphs each one-third of a column—that is the consummation to be wished. My ideas flow fast and free. Suddenly some one knocks at the door. Two hours have fled. How time goes! It is an old friend. We are to eat a little dinner at the Cafe

Royal and drop into the Alhambra for the New ballet. I touch the button, my messenger appears. The leader is despatched to 141, Fleet Street, in the Parish of St. Bride, and off we go arm in arm. After the shower the sunshine. Now for the enjoyment of that paradise of cigar ashes, bottles, corks, ballet, and those countless circumstances of gaiety and relaxation known only to those who are indwellers in the magic circles of London's Literary Bohemia. "Is it not delightful, boys?" . . . and the reply would be, "Superb." "

This is the most lifelike pen picture of one clever brilliant journalist by another that I have ever read. It cannot be improved upon. There are not many of his kind about now. Willie was always so delightfully decorative. He could do nothing until it had been well flowered with blooms of speech.

The last time I really saw him to speak to was at the Adelaide Gallery. I sat with an old friend—now dead—who was on the eve of his second marriage. Willie and the friend had quarrelled, so I thought that as a school-fellow of both I might secure another guest for the morning's ceremony. But Willie would hear of no possible *rapprochement*. "My dear James—much as I sincerely appreciate your ambassadorial kindness of heart, there are certain circumstances which will ever prevent diplomatic relations being re-opened with your unpleasant friend and my equally unpleasant enemy. The orange blossoms, the unnecessary shower of beautiful white rice, the not very elegant slipper, may all follow yonder person to the happiness which he little deserves, but I shall not be a contributory unless certain published apologies are forthcoming which I know would be impossible."

I am not quite so certain that Willie was not in the right; the particular umbrage was a journalistic reference to Willie's mother, Lady Wilde, a fiery, but excellent poetess of the Young Ireland school, who wrote and was well known as "Speranza."

It is only right to say here that Lady Wilde always had a premonitory confidence in Oscar's

superiority as against that of the elder brother. Visiting them one day at their house in Merrion Square, the late George Henry Moore—father of George Moore—an earnest politician in the 'Fifties and 'Sixties, enquired of the mother what she thought of the two boys' prospects. "Oh!" said Lady Wilde, "Willie is all right, but as for Oscar, he will turn out something wonderful," and she preserved this optimistic confidence right through to the very end.

The Wilde family were both clever and eccentric. The mother of Oscar and Willie cut a most weird, yet interesting figure in Society, and had very great literary attributes which were no doubt inherited by her sons. Oscar's theatrical "posing" was distinctly a maternal inheritance, for her white powdered blue-black head was invariably crossed with a laurel wreath, and her bosom and dress over-decorated with a mass of more or less cheap, but invariably artistic jewellery. In her literary efforts she was one of a trio of female poets who subscribed weekly ebullitions of patriotic prose and verse to "The Nation." The three *noms de plume* were "Mary," "Eva," and "Speranza"—the latter as I have said being Oscar Wilde's mother. What a surrounding of grief came over the three writers. "Mary," a Miss Browning, fell in love with a young Ireland factionist—he flew from arrest for safety to America—and she died of a broken heart in a convent; "Eva," a Miss Kelly, became engaged to a young student who was "transported" (*i.e.* sent to Australia as a felon—it was not till later on that "transportation" was abolished)—for ten years for seditious poetry. On condition that he would not plead guilty, for which he was promised a free pardon, she promised "to wait," and she did—marrying him two days after his arrival, twenty years later, at Kingstown, when he had finished his sentence.

The fate of poor Oscar, "Speranza's" younger son—well, let us draw a curtain over a misguided but never-to-be-forgotten genius.

His mother, Lady Wilde, was a Miss Ellgee—

sister of a New Orleans Judge and daughter of a Wexford parson, and in addition to her "Speranza" signature she had a failing for inditing letters on political subjects to the papers and signed "John Fanshawe Ellis." Gavan Duffy—afterwards Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, and one of our Premiers in Australia, the then Editor of "The Nation"—was indicted and convicted—a conviction which was afterwards quashed—for "high treason" in publishing one of "Speranza's" pieces of verse. When the prosecuting counsel read the poem aloud there was a horrible deathly sympathetic silence through the Court in Green Street, Dublin, only broken by some female sobbing and an emotional move in the public gallery, as an almost fainting woman cried, "I alone am the culprit." It was "Speranza" who spoke.

Reading in "The Nation" of the fast decimation in the Irish National ranks, Lady Wilde—good journalist as she was, immediately rang in with a long, up-to-date "rally to arms," of which I may be personally excused in quoting the first stanza :

"Has the line of the patriots ended,
The race of the heroes failed,
That the bow of the mighty unheeded
Falls back from the hand of the quailed?
Or do graves lie too thick in the grass
For the chariot of progress to pass?"

And to-day is 1912. And the "Chariot of progress" is still trying to pass for Ireland. And the Home Rule millennium is—time will show; but the Irish outlook is brighter, the sunburst is less clouded, and the harvest of "graves may fructify into the fruit of a people's desire."

Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar and Willie, had a rough, but ready wit, and he was very good to the poor. Once an old apple-woman called on him during his dinner-hour, and the following dialogue took place:—

"Oh, Sir William, it's meself that can't see a 'stim,'" ("stim" is the smallest possible particle in Irish talk), "an' they tould me 'twas yerself

could give me back mi eyesight," and she squatted her shrivelled form in the specialist's best arm-chair.

"Damn it, woman!" said the great oculist, what time he bared the pupil of one of her eyes, "what age are ye?"

"Oh! Sir William, I won't be after tellin' you a lie, but come next Michaelmas oi'm ninety-five."

"Good God, woman! go home and go down on your marrow bones and thank the Lord you're alive at all. Who the devil wants to see anything at ninety-five?"

While I am "on" the Wilde family, I may mention "The Poet and the Puppets," a clever burlesque on Oscar Wilde's "Lady Windermere's Fan," written by Charles Brookfield and myself, which was the introductory idea of the musical comedy craze. It was intimated to us that Wilde objected "to being caricatured." Oh, what hypocrisy! We, on the other hand, knowing Wilde's love of *r  clame*, were not averse to a little ourselves. We were "out" for publicity, so we laid ourselves bare to be leg-pulled. Some authority had just disclosed the fact that the real Wilde name was "O'Flaherty," so Brookfield, Charlie Hawtrey and the present writer sat down in my rooms in Shaftesbury Avenue to arrange the opening bars to a musical paraphrase of the tune of "St. Patrick's Day," entitled "That's what made Oscar O'Flaherty Wilde." He got to hear of this, and his rage knew no bounds. He even appealed to E. S. Piggot, the Licenser of Plays, and insisted on our reading him the libretto. This we did, so while cigars burned, the poet puffed, and punctuated each page as it was read with such praises as "Delightful!" "Charming, my old friends!" (His calling Brookfield "old friend" was touching.) "It's exquisite!" etc., etc. As he showed us to the door he just gave us this parting shot: "I feel, however, that I have been—well—Brookfield, what is the word?—what is the thing you call it in your delightfully epigrammatic Stage

English. Eh? Oh yes!—delightfully spoofed!" When the curtain went up on the first night we knew he had, and it was only fear and the Licenser which led us to temporize with the "Poet" before we publicly exposed him pulling "The Puppets."

What Wilde really objected to was the inclusion of his own name, so to please the Licenser of Plays, Brookfield, my collaborateur, took out the word "Oscar" and substituted "neighbour," so that the Chorus of the Song on the first night read as follows :—

"They may bubble with jest at the way that I'm dressed,

They may scoff at the length of my hair.

They may say that I'm vain, overbearing, inane,
And object to the flowers that I wear.

They may laugh till they're ill, but the fact remains still,

A fact I've proclaimed since a child,

That's taken, my dears, nearly two thousand years
To make Neighbour O'Flaherty's child."

In the original the last two lines read :—

"That's taken, my dears, nearly two thousand years
To make Oscar O'Flaherty—Wilde."

Although chronologically out of order, this may be a good opportunity, as I am mentioning Mr Pig-got and his office, to refer to the Licensing of Plays at a time when a Royal Commission enquiry has been discussing its merits and demerits. But several interesting incidents were not then referred to—the following being of special interest. When the "can-can" was done in the 'Seventies at the "St. James'" by F. C. "Fairlie" Phillips in a version of "*Vert-Vert*," by the late Henry Herman, the then Lord Chamberlain objected to the shortness of the frocks, and the general vulgar tone of the dance; so it occurred to the stage-manager, Richard Mansel, to put the girls on the next night in long black satin skirts, with pink fleshing tights and petticoats—"By order of the Lord Chamber-

lain" ran a special line in the programme. This resulted in the withdrawal of the license, and a note to the management with special reference to Mansel :

"I shall also leave such instructions with my successors as will prevent you ever holding a license in your own name again."

Richard Mansel, whose real name was "Lauderdale Maitland," and whose family claimed to be the rightful owners of the Earldom of Lauderdale, felt this "prohibit" keenly. He was a fine, big-framed Athlone Irishman, a splendid stage-manager, a beautiful French scholar, and with his brother William first introduced comic opera, Hervé's "Chilpéric," to this country at the Lyceum in 1871. Mansel's mother was a distinguished Irish wit, who hunted astride, smoked cigars and told a good story. Mansel afterwards staged "La Fille du Tambour Major" at the Alhambra, and was associated with many successes—off and on—but the fear of offending high quarters rather militated against his being engaged by serious managers.

Many stories of the late Mr Piggot are told. Personally I was successful in getting that excellent successful play "The Gaiety Girl" ostracised and *au même temps* hugely advertised practically by my own inexperience. It was Jimmy Davis' ("Owen Hall") first play. Now, Jimmy Davis, as editor of "The Bat," once had to keep an appointment with Justice Hawkins, Lord Brampton, at the Old Bailey; it may be mentioned, at the time of the interview, his Lordship was on the Bench. Poor old "Jimmy" was in another place. The editor, quite honourably, it must be admitted, refused to divulge the name of the writer of the complained-of article, and a temporary seclusion was the result—I think as a first-class misdemeanour. But later on, there was published in his paper another libel, and he stopped in France to avoid the consequences. Exiled there for some years a petition was got up to the libelled Lord

Durham to withdraw the proceedings, and this document was presented at Newmarket in the paddock one day to Sir Henry Hawkins for his signature—with a sort of “return good for evil” behest by the organizer. Hawkins merely said, “I have not yet been given the name of the writer of the first libel,” and walked on. One knows now that both are gone, that the great judge would have melted had Davis given in, but the old “Bat” Editor was true to the best traditions of the Press, and its respects for anonymity.

Now in “The Gaiety Girl,” the character of Mr. Justice “May” was a cross between the personality of Sir Francis Jeune and Lord Brampton (Sir Henry Hawkins), and certain lines, references and word paintings were meant to accentuate some domestic matters in the life of the hanging Judge. I thought this unfair, and I wrote Mr. Piggot to this effect, not in any sense vindictively, but just to emphasize the risk that public men would run if this sort of license were tolerated. Result: eleventh hour interference with the play, and alterations insisted on and carried out. I believe the Play Licenser telegraphed from Devon for Mr. George Edwardes, who was producing “The Gaiety Girl.” The producer quickly obeyed the summons, fell in with the Licenser’s views, and the result was the commencement of “Owen Hall’s” fortune as a playwright.

As for Jimmy Davis, when I told him years afterwards, he laughed heartily, and thanked me for the advertisement.

Personally, I never had much to do with “Jimmy” Davis, but in late life found him one of the very best companions it was possible to find. He used to do many clever things, and one of the smartest was the device by which he escaped the supervisory authority of W. H. Smith & Sons’ “Index Expurgatorius” department. One week he particularly wished to publish a “warm” story. The supervision given to these matters is very rigidly carried out, and at this time was in the hands of a Mr. White, whose name was held in

reverence and mentioned with fear in every London newspaper office. The Editor of "The Bat" knew that this story would be followed by many a protest from the "unco guid," that Mr. White would interfere, order "The Bat" off the bookstalls and the circulation for that week ruined.

At this time, the Right Hon. W. H. Smith was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and "An Open Letter" to the Chancellor appeared in the same issue facing the "warm" story, strongly condemning the financial policy of the reigning Government. The result was exactly as "Jimmy" expected. The particular issue of "The Bat" was banned, but on the Editor intimating to the Chancellor by letter that he thought it poor spite for a Minister to suppress "in his private commercial capacity" a newspaper that was "antagonistic to his political policy as a public man," the generous W. H. Smith (without of course reading "The Bat") immediately telegraphed to the Strand and reinstated the offending organ on all the bookstalls of England.

CHAPTER II

More Fenianism—The escape of James Stephens, the famous Head Centre—Christmas turkey and plum-pudding outside the prison—My father inside—Baron Dowse—Irish conspirators and South African “traitors” — James Stephens and “Dr. Jim” — Chemist’s boy to a monastery in Normandy—Peter Burke, Editor of “Burke’s Peerage”—I start translating French plays—French and English seaside resorts—A comparison—“The National Theatre”—agitation begins—What Victor Hugo said to me—Early comic opera days in Paris—Emile Audran and his contracts—the Basque peasants and their contracts—Arthur Collins recruits “to fight the Boers”—My first experience as a “Pianist-musical director”—A “Commonwealth.”

I NASMUCH as my poor father was more or less intimately connected with the Fenian movement of the early 'Sixties, I do not think that it would bode any good to tell of many experiences which, taking place as they did, when I was but five or six years old, cannot be recorded with as much accuracy as a true chronicler would desire, and would not be too favourably viewed by the few living actors in one of the greatest social and political dramas which have ever been played on the stage of national politics. I will, however, give a reminiscence of an important political event to which my family was more or less a party in 1865, and which, except for a little decorative description, is true in substance and fact.

Kingstown is about six miles from Dublin. My father was a Town Commissioner, a species of local dignity which gave him the prerogative of writing

"T.C." after his name, and "I.O.U." in front of it. Kingstown is historical in its connection with early Fenianism. Most of the conspirators lived there, many of the plots were hatched there, and some of the fugitives were hidden there.

One night, to my mother's utter astonishment, my father announced his intention of going to Dublin, and, what was more amazing still, of remaining away the whole night. If there was any element of distrust in my poor mother's mind, it was dispelled when he announced his further intention of taking me with him. When I had been hauled out of bed, my father and I wended our way down the Forty-Foot Road toward the station. About half-way down he noticed two figures which seemed to be following us—these on closer inspection turned out to be a couple of well-known detectives. We arrived at the station just in time to take our tickets and catch the last train to Dublin.

Between Kingstown and Dublin the train stops six times, and not having had my proper rest, I, on entering the carriage, dozed off to sleep—to be awakened a few minutes later, when my little body was dragged out through a door of the carriage, but on the opposite side. I would have cried out had my father not clapped his hand over my mouth and kept it there till our train was well out of the station.

That night, or rather morning, James Stephens, the prominent Fenian leader, was to be released from prison, collusion with the warder having already been obtained. (Stephens, with John O'Mahoney, founded the Fenian movement in 1858.)

The manner of this collusion has been more or less inaccurately told. The warder Byrne, who carried out the whole business, had a brother, a ticket-collector at Westland Row Station. Now, the working force of the movement lived at Kingstown, and what was easier than to palm off a note with your railway ticket, for the warder to visit his brother in his leisure, for the brother to hand a key to any sympathizer when taking his ticket—

for that key to be moulded and duplicates taken? This was the scheme, and it succeeded.

To alight from the train at Blackrock was my father's idea of "doubling" on the two detectives who were on our track, for they had followed us into the train and went on to Dublin. My father and I having given them the slip, we then got a cab and drove into Dublin by a circuitous route. There was lots of time—'twas then only twelve, and they did not "work" till three.

Byrne the warder had another prison confederate named Breslin, and these two were able to arrange that on one of their rounds the door of Stephens' cell was to be left unlocked; the Head Centre was to be led to the prison wall. At a certain hour two pebbles from the outside would indicate the readiness of the rescuing party, and the reply from Byrne and Breslin inside was a sod of grass thrown over the same wall. Stephens, with the aid of a rope, was then passed over into the welcome arms of his friends, which included my father.

The next morning the whole country was aroused with the "alarming" intelligence of the escape of a great Fenian—James Stephens, the famous Head Centre, who, I since learned, slept his first night out at our house, and a safe asylum found for him elsewhere later till, a few Sundays later, a small fishing smack at Malahide, outside Dublin, sailed for France with a cargo of three human freight, a "coachman," a "postillion," and a "footman," who assisted a "passenger" on to the deck—and that passenger, whom they had driven openly through the streets of Dublin, was James Stephens—the famous Head Centre of the future "Irish Republic" whom all the forces and finances of the British Government could not catch.

This was the reason for the early morning visit from the police referred to in the last chapter. Nine o'clock generally found us coming down to breakfast; but some few weeks after the incident just mentioned, we were aroused by the shuffling of feet coming up the gravel path. My brother and I jumped out of bed and rushed to the window to

find the whole house surrounded. The authorities had a warrant to search the house, which they did, finding nothing more incriminating than a few letters in Italian from an uncle of mine, Ferdinand Glover, who had been studying in Italy preparatory to joining the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company at Drury Lane. This correspondence they triumphantly carried off in the vain hope that they had found some treasonable documents in a cypher language.

The following day my father was sent for by the local magistrate, a Mr. Dix, who requested him to sign a document of dutiful submission to the Throne, and "no more harbour the enemies of the Crown—our Sovereign Lady the Queen."

(I may here mention that my father owned a large hall on his licensed premises, where meetings were held by the Irish Patriots, and in this building most of the functions of the party were held—with closed doors.)

My father refused; when he was politely given sufficient time to arrange his affairs, and, in company with two detectives, proceeded under arrest to Mountjoy Prison, commonly called "Cease to do evil," where he was detained without trial of any kind "during Her Majesty's pleasure." He was not lonely—there were eighty-four "refusers" in all. Drapers, builders, hotel-keepers, grocers, etc., they all declined to show "the white feather," and enforced seclusion was the only alternative.

The next family move was to secure my father's release, if possible, to spend the approaching Christmas at home. All our endeavours failed, and I never shall forget that Christmas Day, when a heart-broken wife and two sons trundled up the Phibsborough Road to Mountjoy Prison on our own outside car. We had not much luggage, but, arrived at the gate, my mother was allowed to enter, carrying with her an already carved turkey, some cut ham, and a few delicacies, but no wine or carving utensil of any kind. We sat outside, my brother and I, on the car, eating our own dinner, and every moment looking up at the now

familiar window behind which a man and wife were trying to spend a merry Christmas—we too young to be aware of the real inwardness of the whole movement. Of course, the "prisoners" in this movement were really only first-class "detenus." Absolutely no punishment whatsoever was awarded them, but like a later-on Coercion Act policy—the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended to close in the principal "agitators"—and so my father had to be "incarcerated."

These interviews were short, and my poor mother often came out melting in tears. We drove home this Christmas Day, neither of us two boys realizing the important bearing that eventful time would have on our future lives, and, three days later, my mother having given the required undertaking (I think, to Baron Dowse in chambers), my father was released, after spending sixteen days in prison—only to find that a bankruptcy petition against him had been allowed to go by default (a ruse on my mother's part to break up the entire surroundings) and we were all penniless.

This escape of the famous Head Centre was the end of an agitation which commenced in the 'Fifties and which had for its sponsors, in the constitutional sense, many strong Irishmen—amongst them, Charles Gavan Duffy and George Henry Moore—the latter the father of George Moore, the novelist. George Henry Moore was an M.P.; he was unseated in 1857, and when Sadleir, the swindling bank manager and M.P., fled the country and was expelled from the House of Commons, Moore protégéd another enthusiast, the O'Donohue, and got him elected for Tipperary.

Stephens and others had started a newspaper called the "Irish People," and it was the suppression of this organ and the breaking up of the propaganda that it carried on which led to the incidents just related. Of course, the Fenian movement had made not only strong headway in Ireland, but also in the English towns where the Irish population predominated; but a series of comic-opera battles and insurrections, certain traitorism among its less

educated "heads," and a misguided idea of what really was the end in view—over a real poverty of funds—all tended to failure. But with all its faults, Mr. Gladstone himself admitted that it was only since "the appearance of Fenianism that the mind of this country (*i.e.* England) has been greatly turned to the consideration of Irish affairs." If Mr. Gladstone were alive now, July, 1912, what would he not have said?

The midnight meetings, the secret happenings, the almost Boucicaultian *régime* of these times often worried my poor mother, who deliberately—and perhaps advisedly, tore up and destroyed on arrival every agenda, notice of meeting or other incriminating document of this troublesome period, which was sent to my father. I say "Boucicaultian" because some of the well-known Irish dramatist's "incidents" were strongly reminiscent of the real things, and often "anticipatory," showing that even the stage was resorted to for some line of campaign.

But one incident my father told me is rather quaint, and quite in the line of the turning tower in "The Shaughraun"; in fact, although not quite similar, there is no doubt that Dion Boucicault had this "escapade" in his mind at the time he wrote "The Shaughraun." My father and some others had made up their minds to "cover" a poor Fenian boy who was chased on a warrant. He was a bit of a "steeplejack" by profession, and hid in the very Church the steeple of which he knew so well from professional acquaintance. Pursued to the very confessional box in which he was hiding, he slipped through the sacristy and started mounting the steeple—the Royal Irish Constabulary officers following him—on the other side, but the conically shaped steeple sheltered the professional climber, and quick as the two policemen followed on one side—the "bhoys" slowly dropped on the other side—niche to niche, and as the cone widened as he descended and covered him he was enabled to get away quite unharmed.

In a later period an incident occurred which

showed how the real revolutionary spirit had crept into every department of even the public service. A Dublin telegraph clerk named — was a Nationalist to the backbone, and when wholesale arrests of Irish members were prevalent, it was a mystery for a long time as to how the "wanted" patriots got to know some time before Dublin Castle that orders were given for their immediate arrest—they thus securing sufficient time to come to England. Now this young patriot (I grant you against Post Office regulations) opined that the cause of Ireland would not be hurt by the conveyance of this early information, and for a very long time the State was baffled. For the very moment that a telegraphic order to arrest arrived at Dublin Castle—the intended prisoner, no matter who he may have been, had "just sailed for England."

It so happened, however, that a telegraph boy one day at a big meeting in the Dublin City Hall, walked up to the wrong person and said "Mr. Parnell, I believe," and the wrong person opened the telegram, gave the show away, and the telegraph clerk paid the penalty of his patriotism, and went to prison according to Post Office regulations.

I regretted this incident very much. I knew the young fellow well. In the daytime he was employed as a telegraph superintendent at the Dublin General Post Office, and at night he wanted to be—and really was—an operatic impresario. He engaged big artists, like Tietjens, Sinico, etc., and with his "Concert Direction" did many a series at the Antient Concert Rooms and Rotunda in Dublin.

The following chestnut is attributed to the judicially human Baron Dowse, who once charged a jury in a libel action where the defence was a printer's error:—"Jintlemin iv th' Joory, the diffince in this case is th'owld wun iv a printer's error. I well remimber once makin' a political speech in Cork and quoting that old saying, 'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay,' and what was my astonishment to read in the 'Cork Constitution' the next morning that I

had said 'Better fifty years of tight-rope than a circus in Bombay!' Now, jintlemin, you know the value iv a printer's error."

In reference to the escape of James Stephens in my friend F. M. Bussy's interesting book, "Irish Conspiracies," Bussy is decorative, inaccurate and beautifully vague. Stephens, I repeat, was housed the night after his escape by my father at Kingstown, and also by Frank Morgan, the Dublin Corporation solicitor. The policeman Mallon's account of the matter is purely "I-was-told-by-the-postman's-sister" sort of history.

At this moment a movement is on foot to erect a statue to Stephens, and I hope I shall be able to join in its success. Naturally, the usual sort of criticism will be hurled at the promoters of the scheme, but I am old enough to have stood on the steps of Bow Street and seen Sir Starr Jameson (Dr. Jim), and Col. M. Rhodes (a brother of Cecil Rhodes) arraigned as traitors and ultimately sent to terms of imprisonment for traitorous arm-bearing against the British Government, and now we make them baronets and heroes, Prime Ministers and Governors of Colonies. James Stephens did no more and no less, and he had real patriotism for his motive and not Stock Exchange "graft."

My father, as I have previously said, was more or less apathetic as to my future career, and up to a certain point actually resented any interference which in his mind might have been made to improve its prospects. It came about, therefore, that after wasting three years of the very best of my life selling senna and salts, I arrived home one night and announced my intention to my grandfather of "chucking it." My father, being away on one of his bi-weekly trips in the West of Ireland, my mother was consulted on the subject, and, with her consent, I found myself on the following morning on the road to London, the day after that on the road to Caen in Normandy, and the morning after that settled down at a little village called Vieux, twelve miles outside the Normandy town.

All the time I was accompanied by my grand

paternal angel, whose sole object was to end the insecurity and unprofitableness of my earlier existence and start me afresh under circumstances which ensured my acquiring a knowledge of French and other languages. At Vieux I stayed some time with some friends, whom we used to know in Dublin, an M. Dupaigne; but whether it was that I found the place too slow—or they found me too fast—I know not; the end of it being that I was removed to a monastery in the town of Caen, there to stay until further orders. My arrival was the day of the annual breaking up for the summer holidays. I must at once begin by saying that I was taken in under protest. It was argued that as there were to be no school-studies during the holidays, it would be useless for me to remain; but my old benefactor was equal to any little emergency of that sort, and pointed out that a sort of colloquial knowledge of French was perhaps the only object of my Normandy visit; so I was allowed to remain, and for three full months I was consigned to the anxious care of sixteen monks.

My only Caen companion, located at the neighbouring Lycée, was a similar summer recluse, a son of Sir Bernard Burke, Peter Burke, now the Editor of "Burke's Peerage." "*Au commencement*"—we are now learning French—allow me to say that no matter where I go or what I do to the end of my days, I shall ever remember the kindness of those kind brothers. Of course, they did not know that they were giving me an education which in future years would be turned to the translation of naughty French plays, a more than liberal knowledge of Zola's books, or the reading of Rabelaisian records to find fit subjects for London ballet librettos: but from the first day to the last there was never anything but the greatest kindness shown me and a thorough consideration exhibited for my lonely position. The fact that I was Irish and that I played the organ did nothing to diminish that friendly feeling, and the last day of my visit was looked upon by me as one of the most miserable in my existence. Of course, arriving at such

a peculiar time of the year, I managed to fall in for all the holiday-making of these frugal folk, and when I think of the long excursions we made into the neighbouring country, and the glorious feasts we made on bread and cheese and cider, I long for the whole time over again, and wonder that our holiday-seeking public do not go to the trouble of finding these happy little resorts, which are unfettered by the vulgarities of the common tripper, and unknown to the hanger-on-billiard sharp and seaside-lounger brigade, not to mention the attraction of a rational holiday, with every kind of amusement, which can be had for about two pounds a week.

From Caen I migrated to Paris, and studied the violin for a period under a master, adding to my meagre income by a little journalism for such English or Irish papers as would take my "stuff." With an authority for a little London illustrated paper in Catherine Street, "The Entr'acte"—("L'Entr'acte" sounded well in French ears)—I managed to secure an "Open sesame" to many a theatre, opera-house and concert. In this wise I determined to make a "coup," or as it is now called in Americanese, a "stunt," and so I came in touch with no less a person than Victor Hugo.

I have no wish, under any circumstances whatever, that any undue importance should be placed upon this interview with one of the greatest poets of last century, but it's a landmark in one's life, so I will describe it.

The manner in which I met Victor Hugo was rather peculiar. A Miss Pfeiffer in the year 1879 wrote a letter to the "Daily News" on the question of a State-subsventioned Theatre, and it is worthy of note that as I am writing now in the year 1912, people are still writing to the "Daily News" and other papers on the same subject. But at that time I was living in Paris and doing remarkably well, thank you, on the sum of sixteen shillings a week, a matter of about twenty francs. Therefore, if I wanted to indulge in any culinary luxury, holiday extravagance, or other embellish-

ment of my usual routine, it was absolutely necessary for me to look to other sources for the "wherewithal." Journalism, as I mentioned before, responded to my call, and having for the purpose a free admission to the Paris theatres, I got the official appointment as the "sole Paris correspondent" to the London illustrated theatrical weekly referred to, at the enormous emolument of nothing a year, then edited and owned by my old friend, the late W. H. Coombes.

Miss Pfeiffer's letter gave me the idea of interviewing Victor Hugo on the question of State-aided theatres, obtaining his views as to how they operated in France, and trying to get him to commit himself to some opinion as to how he thought they would work in England. Access to the great man was more or less easy, if one knew how to go about it, but if one didn't, a little subterfuge was necessary, and with the knowledge that Victor Hugo had somewhat sympathized with the Fenian Movement in Ireland, I thought I would at least make some good out of an agitation which had so much interested him. Under these circumstances I approached the great man. I wrote and told him I was an Irishman, that I was exiled, that my father and mother were too poor to keep me, that his sympathies I had noticed in all his writings were for "the down-trodden country" (good touch this). I compared his exile in England and Jersey to the exile of my dear father in America. I appealed to him as a poor heart-broken Hibernian nomad, and I asked him to assist me, to do me a slight favour, and explain a matter which had arisen in discussion in London journalistic circles in reference to National Drama in England and the theatre in general.

Through the kindness of Mr. Massey, a relative of Redan Massey, the former a Paris correspondent of the Dublin "Freeman's Journal," I managed to obtain Hugo's address, which was 230, Avenue D'Eylau, now the Avenue Victor Hugo. Following on my first letter, which was thrown out as a feeler, I made several visits to the house and

carried on a conversation in worse French than my education permitted me, so as to make myself sufficiently misunderstood by the servants, in order to gain a further introduction to the great man. Right in the foreground of all my argument I kept up the spirit of the "*pauvre Irlandais*," and this, I should think, was the "Open sesame" to the whole affair. I received a letter to call, which I did, and was ushered into the Poet's large dark oak sitting-room with its huge log fires burning; I could hear the clash of knives and forks in the adjoining apartment which told me dinner was "on," and I sat for one solid hour, afraid to move, until at last the large curtains were drawn and the noble, white-haired man appeared. He was accompanied, as was his wont on these occasions, by M. Louis Blanc. It is not my purpose to enter into any elongation of the interview beyond saying that the generous old man walked up to me, shook me cordially by the hand, sympathized with me thoroughly, asking what he could do for me and entered into conversation.

His views on a National Theatre or a Comedie Française in London were as follows: "From the standpoint of Art there is absolutely no doubt but that a Comedie Anglaise in London would do a great deal for native art, but I am afraid that the conditions under which the Drama pursues its way in your Metropolis, the conditions under which your poets and authors write their works, the conditions under which they are performed, and the general atmosphere of irresponsibility under which the average Briton patronizes all amusements, and his theatres in particular, render it almost impossible that the scheme about which you have written me could be successfully realized. More than this, sir, I do not feel disposed at this late hour of the evening to say, and if these remarks of mine can be of any use to you to write over to your country, so long as you do not misconstrue my meaning, you are welcome." I made a note at the time of these remarks—which I may say are perfectly non-committal.

He then bowed me gently out, and not having the necessary 'bus fare back, I wended my way past the *Arc de Triomphe*, down the *Champs Elysées*, that night thickly carpeted with snow, and hurried me home. I don't think there is anything wonderful in this interview, but I may be allowed to emphasize the point that Victor Hugo pointed out in 1879 that a National Theatre was impossible in this country, and here are we in 1912, thirty years later, no nearer such a *desideratum*.

For the rest of my stay in Paris, I do not think I did anything of sufficient importance to find record in these pages. I was present at the first evening of "*La Fille du Tambour Major*," Offenbach's one-hundredth work, and I think one of his greatest operas—(spoiled in this country by being produced in too large a theatre, the Alhambra)—and I remember the cry of the French pittites on the first night, when they started the beautiful waltz in the overture, "*C'est lui, c'est lui, c'est bien lui.*" I was also at the first night of "*Olivette*" at the old "*Bouffes Parisiennes*," and I had a great deal to do at the time with the immediate importation of these two operas into England.

"*Olivette*" was, you may remember, the first introduction of Audran to this country, who later on took England by surprise in "*La Mascotte*," and though he failed in the "*Grand Mogul*," he capped them all in "*La Poupée*." He was a thin, anæmic, little weak man, with an eternal stomachic complaint. He came over here and generally stood on the stage at rehearsals and refused to allow any interpolation in his score. A song being required for Father Maxim in "*La Poupée*" he consented to one being manufactured out of the waste melodies of the chorus work and any other strains from any other opera of his own composition. In this way the great Monk's Song was incubated, making the hit of the night. In the original opera the chorus of the "*Jovial Monk*" was a drunken chorus of intoxicated clerics. This was altered! Mr. Lowenfeld, the manager of the theatre, asked him to come over to conduct for the

500th night. He did so, but made it a *sine qua non* that a pound of grapes, a box of chocolates, and a pint of milk should be placed in his bedroom every night he was in England. This was actually inserted as a clause in his contract.

These special contract provisions often take humorous turns. During the South African War, Mr. Arthur Collins of Drury Lane wanted some giants for the Drury Lane pantomime, and reading that the farmers in the Basque country wintered on stilts owing to the treacherous marshy land, he made his way there with the author, Mr. Arthur Sturgess, and Attilio Comelli, the designer. After great trouble he persuaded twelve of the peasants to come to London for the three months' pantomime season, the English Drury Lane trio finding themselves described in "Le Matin" as "*Un Syndicat Anglais qui a essayé recruter des Français d'aller in Afrique Sud pour prendre armes contre les Boers.*" Of course this brought about a serious diplomatic situation. *Je ne pense pas*, but all went well till the contract was received by the Basque actors. They did not mind travelling third-class, they did not mind smoky brouillardesque London for three months, they did not even object to leaving their wives and sweethearts; but a *sine qua non* as strong as the laws of the Medes and Persians was that they should have placed in their rooms in their Soho hotel every morning for breakfast at 8 a.m. "half a pound of Gruyère cheese and a bottle of claret." Fancy such a matutinal feast.

Returning to my own career. On my arrival from Paris in 1880 I found myself stranded in London, with the intimation that my regal allowance of twenty shillings was to be discontinued, and that I was to consider myself in the position of "paddling my own canoe." Under conditions which to me at the moment appeared somewhat lordly, I answered an advertisement for a pianist in the "Era," was successful, joined a woman-magician entertainment as solo pianist at the enormous salary at thirty-five shillings a week, and commenced my life at Southampton. The

magician-lady was a so-called mesmerist, who performed all sorts of ridiculous feats to which I was to "vamp" appropriate music. It did not require much intelligence when two gentlemen were giving a demonstration of the noble art of self-defence while under the influence of the "occult" science, to vamp, "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do"; or when a gentleman was giving an up-to-date imitation of the dance attributed to St. Vitus, to play, "See me dance the Polka"; nor when a lady floated about in the belief that she was "flying" was it out of the way to suggest, "I would I were a bird"; although mistakes might arise, and did arise, for in a moment of temporary aberration it often happened that when the bird-lady was flying about in the air (there were no aeroplanes in those days), the tune I played was the old one of "When the pigs begin to fly"—a topical ditty with this title was popular at the time.

To my humorous mind, this sort of thing was second nature. So it came about that I, who had Klondyked a possible millionaire's income by the calculation of innumerable years at thirty-five shillings a week, found myself at the end of the second week of my engagement incontinently thrown into the street, told that I was "no good," that my engagement "had finished," and that I would have the extreme honour of paying my own railway fare back to London. These were not the actual words used, but that is what it all amounted to, for the exact difference of opinion which so rudely interrupted my Utopian ideas was the fact that I hadn't cleaned my own boots. This, of course, was only a ruse, and an absence of candour prevented them telling me I was no good—as a matter of fact I don't think I was much; but after everything is said and done, when one has been to some of the finest colleges in Ireland, given a big musical education, sent to a swell "pension" in France—to the best masters in Paris, and speaks French like a native, it is rather hard to be told that you haven't sufficient intelligence to play the piano to

a dancing Dervish at a magician's entertainment in a small English village, or to suggest the appropriate music for a local navvy swallowing a pint of paraffin oil—and all for 5s. 11d. a night. I did not mind being told my piano-playing was not "polished," but I drew the line at a similar reference to my boots. I protested; thus I was incontinently dismissed.

Now it so happened that in that town, at a neighbouring music-hall, were "The Three Sisters Lorraine," and one of these charming ladies had got it into her head that I was very much like the other sister, so much so that they called me "Brother." (Later on I called them other things, but that is another story.) The three sisters, with the aid of two acrobats, a sword-swallower and a man-fish, formed themselves into a company-promoting scheme, and went to the neighbouring Portsmouth for a week, asking me if I would join them. The position placed itself before me thus: cash in hand 10s., in P.O. Savings Bank 5s., fare to London 8s. Possibilities in London, nothing. Possibilities in Portsmouth, everything. I need not detail the matter, but to Portsmouth we went and we made a big failure there. The acrobats bolted, the man-fish accepted an engagement at the local music-hall with the sword swallower, the three Sisters returned to London, and I was told that the whole thing was a Commonwealth and asked to take twelve shillings or nothing. An early acquaintance with Mr. Euclid having familiarized me with the difference between twelve shillings and nothing, I accepted the twelve shillings; but I had made one condition: that whatever position I occupied during the week's Commonwealth, whether it was playing the piano, selling programmes, or dressing the three acrobats—I made it a *sine qua non* that I should be described on all the bills as a full-blown "Musical Director." Strange though it may seem, that was the happiest move of all, because it influenced my entire career.

CHAPTER III

I join Charles Collette—Theatrical Digs—George Moore's "Mummer's Life"—how it was written—The Novelty (Kingsway) Theatre—Financing the show—The ex-convict moneylender with the gouged-out eye—Insuring the backer's life—for salaries—At the Old Bailey—Teddy Solomon—the Guards' burlesque—Keeping the "Ladies of the Chorus" respectable—"The Mahdi" deletes my chorus—I compose, conduct, sing, dance and stage-manage for fifty shillings a week—How H.R.H. the Prince of Wales refused to be smuggled into the theatre—Lord Alfred Paget and the music-librarian—Some musical discoveries.

I CAME straight to London, just in time to read that the Theatre Royal, Dublin, had been destroyed by fire. This gave me a rather melancholy twinge, for a great deal of my early recollections, as I have recounted, were associated with the old house in Hawkins Street—the scene of the early struggles of Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, the Rignolds, T. C. King, Barney Williams, Barry Sullivan, and many famous people. These were all giants. Where are their prototypes now? Is the motor-car Maida-Vale-maisonetted manager of the twentieth century a greater artist? One pauses for reply.

The Theatre Royal had prospered more and more every year under the Gunns until this catastrophe, the one regrettable fatality being the death of the manager, Frank Egerton, who, true to his post, was killed trying to save his master's property. Mrs. Egerton was a Miss Glover, remotely connected with our family, and the incident cast a gloom over everything theatrical in Dublin for some time to come.

On the morning referred to, when I arrived from Portsmouth, I saw the whole world and fifteen shillings before me, but I had possessed myself of half-a-dozen bills on which my name was paraded as "Musical Director," and with these in hand I immediately proceeded to write for free admissions to the various London theatres. In the ordinary course I directed one of these requests to Mr. W. H. Griffiths, at that time acting manager of the "Old Dusthole" in Tottenham Court Road, where that great histrionic Miss Genevieve Ward was playing in "Forget-Me-Not." Imagine my surprise, not to mention my joy, on receiving the following letter back :—

DEAR SIR,

If you are a Musical Director, and would like an engagement, come down here to-morrow night.

Yours truly,

W. H. GRIFFITHS.

I went, I saw, I conquered. I walked out with an engagement in Mr Charles Collette's burlesque company, at the then to me handsome emolument of £3 per week. The company, at that time, constituted :—Mr. Charles Collette—who married a sister of Lady Bancroft, Mr. Lionel Rignold, Mr H. E. Marston—whose father was Governor of Richmond Prison, Dublin, Mr. Charles Langley, Miss Katie Ryan, Miss Lottie Harcourt, and many others—but only the first two are still in the land of the living.

These touring experiences often lead to many anecdotes, which enliven the hours of travelling and help to pass off many a weary hour of waiting. It was of a Scotch manager, too well known for his protection of the "bawbee," that we used to tell a good story. He came, saw and admired a pantomime in which my friend Tom Murray, an American comedian, had made a huge success. A note sent round to Murray conveyed the intelligence that the Scotch manager would like to interview him at his hotel "i' the morn, ye ken." "Now don't be a fool," cried his dressing-room comrades,

"he's Scotch and sure to beat you down—leave a margin for retreat, ask a good salary—don't make yourself cheap, etc."

In the morning, Murray, with these admonitions ringing in his ears, duly presented himself at the hotel, and was ushered into the drawing-room; there awaiting him he found the Scotch manager—whose wife all the time sat in the neighbouring bow window knitting crochet. The point of view was soon explained. Murray's performance the previous evening had been "much admired"—the manager "might require his services"—only "might"—"for the following Christmas," and if he did so, "what were the lowest terms that he thought he could accept?" Murray pulled himself together—visioned in his mind the dressing-room admonitions of the previous evening—and said, "Well, Mr. A—, I am afraid that the lowest fee I could take for next year would be £200 a week." The man of Heatherland burst into a huge paroxysm of laughter, he shouted his sides out with merriment, then turning to the bow window to his wife exclaimed, "Carrie, did ye hear that—did ye hear it—Mr. Murray wants two hundred pounds a week—Carrie, he's funnier off the stage than he is on."

During these touring days one met many curiosities of men, modes and manners. It is told of the late Mr. Wyndham—the father of the present living and popular F. W. Wyndham—that he wrote to a well-known comedian for his lowest terms for Christmas. These were not days of £200 comedians with two gags and a restaurant *clientèle* of bibulous bookmakers and corpulent coryphées; soon the reply came back, "My lowest terms for Christmas are four pounds per week," so the astonished manager replied:—

DEAR SIR,

Your terms to hand. I accept, as you are the first comedian who has ever made me laugh.

Yours truly,

R. H. WYNDHAM.

I myself have had many experiences of these "sock and buskin" humours when touring. I was conducting once at Oldham (Owdham) near Manchester, and could not get the local orchestra to play a clog dance to time. It must be remembered that the audiences of all these Lancashire and Yorkshire towns are themselves expert dancers. This caused considerable inconvenience to the dancer, whose evident discomfort was perceptible to the gallery. In a sudden silence, laughter saved the situation with this impromptu remark from the impatient gods: "Hand oop, lads, fur better band."

In the same town Fannie Leslie, one of London's greatest "Principal Boy" stars, was late, and asked me to go into the orchestra and kill time by looking round and admiring the audience. This I did for five minutes, when a voice came from the humorous Olympian heights, "Play oop, beggar wi' long nose!"

Another little joke is that of the manager who toured the towns with spouses who had not always been provided with marriage certificates. Arrived at a Northern town once, this Roscian Lothario drove up to his old-time apartments, knocked at the door, and jumping out of the cab helped his "Missis" to the door. "Ah, Mrs Boniface, here we are again, you know the wife, don't you? My dear, you remember Mrs Boniface?" By this time the good lady of the house had automatically embraced the "Missis," but exclaimed, "Eh! lady, how tha's changed." "What's that?" said the actor. "A wuz only sayin' as 'ow she's changed, why, Mr F——, she's not the same woman." "No, she's not," was the quick retort, "get us some dinner."

I have always a fear of "panics" on a first night, and often wonder how these nervous disturbances cause more trouble than the actual outbreak of a fire; so that on the first night of Tennyson's "Promise of May" at the Globe Theatre, when "Old Q," the Marquis of Queensberry, stood up in the stalls and protested as an atheist against

some particular portion of the duologue, which did not fall in with his views, I approached my old Bohemian friend quite concernedly, and managed to quiet him down.

Similarly, when a play by Wilkie Collins, called "Rank and Riches," was done at the Adelphi, G. W. Anson, a well-known comedian, came on and lectured the audience as to their treatment of this "great author," which brought a protest from Mr. G. W. Plant, the editor of "Society," a weekly journal of the time; it took us all some time to quiet down the house.

It was during this tour that I collected the material which was unblushingly attached by Mr. George Moore in his "Mummer's Wife." My early associations with the Moores of Galway were purely of a family nature, and when I was thrown among them in London we became very great friends. George lived at 3, Danes Inn, and for a time I threw my lot in with "Dick" Mansel, already referred to at No. 4 next door. The Moores were doing a version of "Les Cloches de Corneville" for F. C. "Fairlie," otherwise F. C. Phillips, Barrister-at-law, Novelist and Theatrical Manager, who was opening a season at the Novelty, that theatre then called the "Folies Dramatiques," in honour of the Parisian house where Planquette's opera first saw the light. For the purpose of adapting the French words to the English sense (done by the Moores), it was necessary to have a pianist, and in this way I was found useful. The day or night's programme was generally a dinner at Gatti's or the Tivoli Restaurant—the old site of the present Music Hall—or we met at a little Italian cabaret which stood on the site of the present Gaiety Theatre; there till closing time, we repaired to Danes Inn, and I "obliged" on the piano till 3 a.m. or 3.30, when we adjourned for breakfast to one of the early houses in Covent Garden, and after which retiring to bed for a similar day and night to follow. During these midnight orgies I admit youth-like that I talked volubly and possibly in a Bohemian way decoratively, only to find that every incident in my

touring life was faithfully reproduced in "The Mummer's Wife." Almost every character in the book was a life portrait. Whether we all appreciated our being held up to nature or not in this fashion is purely a question of opinion.

All I got out of the scheme was a suggestion in a City paper that I was the original thief who stole the railway station sandwiches as mentioned in the book. I had to prosecute an expensive action for libel, and the present Mr. Justice Avory succeeded in getting me a verdict for £50—which damages I never recovered.

Derby station in touring days used to be the only place where a married actor was safe to meet his wife. All sorts and conditions of "mummers" crossing country, separated spouses, children, brothers and sisters, found the Sunday waits—sometimes twenty minutes, oftentimes as many hours—the only possible family reconciliation for "months and months and months."

The manner in which the illegitimate version of "Les Cloches" came to be done was curious. F. C. Fairlie was associated with the late Alexander Henderson in its original production, and when some disagreement arose at the Globe Theatre, and Henderson threatened to withdraw the opera, it was used as a lever by Fairlie that there was some flaw in the registration, and that the music was "free," leaving it open to any person to produce "another version." Fairlie then commissioned "another version," by both the Moores, which ultimately only ran six nights. The strange part of it all was that H. B. Farnie, who did the original translation, occupied rooms underneath the Moores and Mansel in Danes Inn, and for many weeks preceding the illegitimate production he had to be tortured with hearing the opera tunes distorted and disfigured by me on the piano to make them fit the English lyrics of the Moores, which if successful would have more or less cheapened his property. It may here be mentioned that the original copyright in the work has since been maintained in a Court of Law.

George Moore afterwards tried his hand at a one-

act comic opera, "The Fashionable Beauty," with music by the present writer, at the Avenue Theatre, but it only ran about two weeks, and, looking back on the production, that was about as much as it deserved. It was a slack-baked effort, at least of mine, but it served to introduce for the first time prominently in London as a dancing girl a lady who in the comedy which preceded it was playing "Old women character parts"—Miss Betty Lind, who had previously in her own name—Miss Rudd—appeared at Drury Lane.

Perhaps some of the most peculiar experiences that one went through in the earlier days were those associated with the financing of the musical entertainments, and none of these was surrounded with such precarious experiments as the before-mentioned "Cloches de Corneville" season.

The finance for this production was found by a Mr. Aubrey Hinds, a young blood, since dead. He was provided by a money-lending tout named M——, who had a glass eye. It appeared that in years gone by the tout had been transported to Australia for fraud, and in prison discovering a plot against the life of the Governor, he "informed" on the conspirators, as a reward was released "on leave," and returned to England. He was followed later on by his two former associates in jail, who on their liberation also came home, ran him to earth, and revenged themselves by gouging out one of his eyes. On this interesting, if unhandsome personality, we were dependent for the money for our weekly salaries. One "Treasury" day, when the life insurance was not got through (which was necessary to a further loan from the one-eyed exchequer), four dejected people—the late Richard Mansel, the Insurance Company's Doctor, the Solicitor to the Syndicate, and "Francis Fairlie" (F. C. Phillips), pursued "the nice young gentleman" into Bedfordshire for the proper guarantees and medical inspection, without which the Insurance Company would not complete the policy, and without which the money-lender would not advance the monies to pay the poor girls' salaries.

When the season was over, an action at law arose against the gilded youth's estate for the recovery of certain amounts alleged to be due. To save further expense, the Trustees tendered a large amount in Court to stop the action. The plaintiffs, however, refused this liberal offer, and the Judge adjourned the Court for luncheon, and suggested further *pourparlers* with a view to settlement between counsel. Just as the Court resumed after luncheon, the Associate handed the Judge a telegram, after reading which his Lordship said: "The case is at an end. I have in my hand a telegram informing the Court that the defendant died just before we adjourned."

Later on the glass-eyed merchant appeared at the Old Bailey in another fraud charge, and received another taste of "Her Majesty's pleasure." As the jury brought in their verdict of "Guilty," and just before sentence, some one passed a note to a jurymen, which evoked all sorts of protests from counsel on both sides as to the propriety of its being read. Old Sir Thomas Chambers—the Recorder—smiled and said he had "no objection" to the note being read out. With due solemnity the Associate read out: "The Judge is a bally old fool, and a friend of the prisoner's." To which old "Tommy" promptly replied: "I assure you, gentlemen, I have never seen the prisoner before in my life." "Not," interrupted counsel for the Crown, "since you sent him to penal servitude twenty years ago." (Tableau.)

When the old Evans Rooms were open in Covent Garden—now the National Sporting Club—one of its attractions was a chorus of boys, which more or less ran concurrently with the boys' chorus in "Babil and Bijou" at Covent Garden in 1873. In this collection were two Yiddisher youths, Bower and Fred Solomon, both of them brothers of Edward (Teddy) Solomon, who was destined later on to commence but never to finish a brilliant career. Two at least of these boys boasted relationship to the late Napoleon III., through some sort of a Morganatic liaison not necessary to insist upon. Old

Charlie Solomon, their father, was a pianist, and from this source was developed the very great musicianly gifts of Edward Solomon. Edward began his professional career as a pianist at the Old Mogul (Middlesex) Tavern Hall in Drury Lane. A brilliant executant, he wrote hornpipes in the stock orchestral book for a shilling each, and later on emerged from this pewter-pot and sawdust-floor atmosphere to be Director of Music for Charles Wyndham, Alexander Henderson and other well-known West-end managers. He was the first musical director for "Les Cloches de Corneville" at the old Folly Theatre (now thrown into Charing Cross Hospital), and as Shiel Barry the original miser had lost his voice at the dress rehearsal he put the identical notes that Barry should have sung on the first night into the trombone part of Planquette's orchestration.

This effect, simple as it was, made a distinct success on the first night, and mainly helped the big scene into this sensational achievement, although at rehearsal it was predicted "a failure."

Solomon was one of the cleverest musicians of the 'Seventies and 'Eighties, but he never "made good," although he threatened at one time to rival Arthur Sullivan. He did a lot of clever work, though beyond gathering cash "deposits" and securing short runs, he never actually got there. He was married five times, one of his legitimate spouses being the handsome Lillian Russell, who has recently married her fourth spouse. His pianoforte impromptus were wonderful, and to charm a hundred pounds or two out of a music publisher or a theatre directorate was, with him, as easy as winking. One morning the Alhambra Board wrote him enquiring if he had an opera ready, as they wanted one immediately. Of course, he had. So he wired an eminent librettist :

"Come to Cavour next door to Alhambra lunch at 1. We play our new opera to Alhambra directors at 3.

TEDDY."

Now, till Sydney Grundy, the E.L. referred to, received this wire, the librettist did not know that they *had* a new opera ready, and he stated so emphatically on arrival at the Cavour. "Never mind that," said Teddy, "you tell them a story of Indians—stolen white-face—battle—arrival of American rescuers—burning at stake—spectacular ballet, and all will be well and the deposit—£200—is ours."

And so it happened—Ted rattled them the "Grand March of the Sioux Indians over the Bridge," "The Love Song of the Pale White-face," "The Battle in the Forest," "The Grand Ballet before the Burning at the Stake," and "The Triumphant March at the end for the Rescue." They were delighted. Henry Sutton, the Chairman, said it was lovely; Archibald Nagle, the bill-poster, another Director, liked those lovely tunes; and General Hale-Wortham, also on the Board, "knew nothing about music, but thought it all good." But the only musically educated Director on the Board, Charles Coote, their specialist, was absent, so "would Teddy come two days later and let him hear the opera?" In the meantime, Teddy touched for £200 on account of fees for that or any other opera. Two days later they all met. Henry Sutton hummed and hah-ed, Nagle did not think it "was quite so good," and General Wortham said, "It hardly improved on second hearing"; Coote said, "Is this all?" The truth was poor Teddy had forgotten every note he had improvised the day previous, improvised an entirely different work, and departed the next morning for New York with his wife and the £200.

Solomon had a nasty habit of selling a song three or four times over. One of his very best, "Do you think that he'll come back—don't know," was sold in turn to Charlie Hawtrey, George Edwardes, Alma Stanley, W. S. Penley, and E. Ascherberg; and the morning after he produced "The Red Hussar" with Marie Tempest for H. J. Leslie, the gentleman who had made a fortune out of "Dorothy," everybody concerned received injunctions

from people who had already bought it as "The White Sergeant," or some similar title. But he had a fund of melodic wit and an originality in his orchestration not to be encountered too often in these declining musical comedy days.

About this time I used to do a lot of work for Teddie Solomon. I was one of the earliest musical directors of the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square, where he placed me in 1885. Solomon, as I have hinted, threatened at one time to become a rival to Arthur Sullivan, who had a great appreciation of his abilities, but he had the misfortune to be associated with weak libretti. For the last three years of its existence, I "devilled" the music of the Guards' burlesque, for Solomon, with which I assisted at the piano the first time, and the second time scored nearly all the music. The present Lord Cheylesmore, Lord Athlumney, Sir Augustus Webster of Battle Abbey (our prominent "Blackeguardsman"; he was one of the Guards' nigger troupe, and a dapper on the banjo), Colonel George Nugent, Lord Newton, and others, all made a brave show which helped charity, enlivened barrack life, and alas for its reputation! relieved a dullness in Society which modern innovations have not improved to advantage. The Guards were all amateurs, and only in the female *rôles* encouraged professionals. I will never forget Major Crompton Roberts in a "Widow Twankey" part with the song, "I wasn't a bit like a boy." It was one day, however, suggested that the late hours kept at the "Impromptu Café Royal" of the Officers' quarters (where we dined, wine, and chimed till all hours), and the genial Bohemianism of the *entourage*, did not conduce to military discipline, so the following season, before starting rehearsals, a dear old gentleman, Colonel Wigram, had the following notice posted up in the rehearsal room:—

"ONLY LADIES OF GUARANTEED RESPECTABILITY WILL IN FUTURE BE ALLOWED IN THE BARRACKS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES."

This did it—one more season and the Guards' Burlesque was a thing of the past.

I never enjoyed myself more than while they lasted. The rehearsals started after lunch, and continued till "time to dress for dinner." The chorus was a sight. About sixteen officers—a lord, an earl, a baron, a knight, a major or two, a few captains. They came when they liked, wore what they liked, and sang as they liked. When they shouted out a comic song, it was not Teddy Solomon's version or mine that they sang, it was their own smoking-room edition, but in the end they pulled themselves together, and Clement Scott, in the "Daily Telegraph," ordered Alex. Henderson, H. B. Farnie, and George Edwardes to go and take a leaf out of the book of these "very funny people and give us the same thing in the West End." I shall never forget when we migrated to Windsor for three nights, all duly quartered at the White Hart, how poor old Colonel Wigram, in the front row of the stalls at the Windsor Theatre, leaned over and stopped poor Kate Vaughan's dance with these words: "Glover, you're doing it too fast; now take it from me," and immediately proceeded to conduct my Band. It was only a band of six, and we had two first violins—Mr. G. W. Byng (now Musical Director of the Alhambra) and Herman Finck, in a like position at the Palace.

A great admirer of these festivities was the late King Edward VII.; and the Princess Mary of Teck, mother of the present Queen, patronized every performance, the profits of which—if any—went to charity.

Solomon did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his undoubted genius. He had a horrible habit of getting married. I mean legally married. He introduced me to at least twelve "Solomon's wives," and I can safely say that he had gone through some sort of marriage ceremony in some country with at least five of them. His most handsome spouse was the famous and beautiful Lillian Russell. One day on the stage of a New York theatre, during a rehearsal of one of his operas, "Lord Bateman,"

he started playing his "Silver Line"—a beautiful melody. "I'll leave my home for the composer of that melody." "Right," said Teddy to the lady speaker, "let us sail on Saturday." And sail they did, arriving in England, where they were married, and were received in open arms by John Hollingshead, who "presented" both in "Paul and Virginia," an opera by Solomon and H. Pottinger Stephens, at the Gaiety Theatre. But through a procession of wives, concubines, and other attachments, this clever musician wandered till he died almost unknown, unthought of, and uncared for in a flat-hovel in Maiden Lane, where at the last moment I was enabled to do something towards seeing that he was laid to rest with some sort of reputable respect.

Apart from my experience with soldiers in the Guards' Burlesque, my only other experience of soldier singers, this time of the rank and file, was in "The Lady of the Locket" at the Empire, where Henry Hamilton, the author, and Willie Fullerton, the composer, insisted on some of the choruses being sung by real guardsmen. It cost me ten weeks' hard work to teach sixteen soldiers to render harmonized choruses, and then I took up the paper one morning to find that the Mahdi had made "a demonstration," and the regiment with my choristers was ordered to Egypt. During this season I had £3 a week. For this I composed the opening operetta, "Ten Minutes for Refreshment," for which I had given an unknown actor, Richard Mansfield, 10s. on account of £3 for the entire rights, conducted it, later on leading the unseen choruses of the opera in the first act, then in an emergency dressed in a Venetian gown, doing a dance in the second act, what time I chanted these words :—

Oh, we are the Council of Ten,
All truly remarkable men,
And he is the doge—a deuce of a doge—
And we are the Council of Ten.

The second act finished, I put on evening dress

and conducted the entire ballets of the third act. It was during this opera that, its fortunes waning, the services of the late Lord Alfred Paget were requisitioned to induce the then Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.) to visit the Empire. The Alhambra had passed through a thorny licensing session on its application for a music-hall license, and the songs of Arthur Roberts were hotly criticized. The night the Alhambra re-opened, Roberts sang a great ditty there called "I'm a highly respectable Singer." This publicity raised a doubt as to the class of performance that was anticipated at the newer house. It first opened with "Chilperic" by Hervé—a revival, then followed "Polly," by Edward Solomon and "Jimmy" Mortimer, the once Editor of "The London Figaro," a paper subventioned to keep alive the Bonapartist spirit of Napoleon III. Transferred from the Noventy, "Polly" shared the programme, with the first performance in England of the "Coppelia" ballet, and it took us later on into "Pocohontas," by Sydney Grundy and Edward Solomon, in which Mr. Hayden Coffin made his first professional appearance on any stage. It was agreed that, if the Prince of Wales came, a sort of matchwood tunnel should be built to his box to ensure what we were told was much needed privacy; this was intimated to us by Lord Alfred Paget. This was accordingly done, much to the annoyance of the Royal visitor, who showed his usual consideration and tact by not using it, but by mixing among the audience, and during the interval visiting the golden upstairs foyer (the first specimen of the new extravagance in decorative music-hall art), and enjoying a cigarette with Mr. Henry Osborn O'Hagan, the financier of the concern, the lately-deceased manager, Mr. H. J. Hitchens, and the late Lord Alfred Paget.

Another quaint experience was on the first night of this "Lady of the Locket." The final fall of the curtain brought huge cries of "Coffin, Coffin, Coffin!" A wag in the gallery shouted out, "Rather early to call for the 'Coffin' to bury the play after its first performance!"

Somehow or other, Edward Solomon could not tolerate Lord Alfred Paget, and as the genial old gentleman was one day listening to Sydney Grundy and Solomon's "Pocohontas," the composer's brother, a diminutive little music-copyist, went up to his lordship and said: "All the chorus gentlemen are engaged, but we want an old man to carry on a pie in the comic scenes."

Solomon, in order to "hold the fort," had forced "Pocohontas" on to the management, and it was scored and copied at a white heat. All hands—friendly and professional—were called to the rescue for copying the music, and many a late night when we were working we commandeered the popular composer, Lionel Monckton, to do some parts—and I do know that I always gave the composer of "The Quaker Girl" the most difficult ones. When the curtain went up on the first act the parts of the second act were not dry, and as the show went on I passed the ink-wet music sheets into the orchestra for each number.

In this chapter I have mentioned several names which, judged by later events, demand rather more importance for anecdotal purposes than seem possible at first mention. Frank Celli, the Captain John Smith of "Pocohontas," had a handsome presence and a fine voice, but over-estimated his own importance, and had some of the worst vanities of the star artiste. We all wanted to do honour to little Charley Alias—the costumier in 1886—so it was arranged to give him a benefit performance of "Les Cloches de Corneville," with a great cast. Everybody of note was in the chorus, and Celli was announced for the *rôle* of "The Marquis." He kept the curtain down at this performance a quarter of an hour because Farnie would not make a personal announcement about his sore throat, a species of concert-room "swank" very often indulged in. Farnie raved and swore, but all to no purpose. Now it so happened that four "Cloches de Corneville" touring companies were just then "resting," and their respective "Marquises" were all in the stalls on this occasion, so that when an

impasse seemed imminent, it was an easy thing for me to rush through the iron door, ask Farnie what was "up," and on finding the cause of the delay find my way to Celli's room. "I refuse to sing—I won't go on—I insist," raved Celli. These were the words which greeted my entrance to the dressing-room. "Well," I spluttered, "Farnie says he'll give you three minutes, and in that time if the curtain is not up, either William Hogarth," one Marquis then touring the opera, "John Howson," the original London Marquis, or "Lithgow James," the original provincial Marquis, "all of whom are in the stalls, will be on the stage." Celli sang.

Two of the "fiddlers" I have mentioned in this chapter have both pursued their modestly begun career to havens of great success.

I discovered Mr Herman Finck in my orchestra of ten at the Comedy, when I was with Charlie Hawtrey. I removed him to the Palace, and made him one of the first violinists at 52s. 6d. a week, on the opening night. He is now its excellent music director, and composer of one of the greatest successes of modern times, "In the Shadows."

Finck was a pupil of Henry Gadsby's at the Guildhall, and deciding to leave Hawtrey at the Comedy I arranged for him to succeed me. But some argument arose between the future Palace music director and annoyed Hawtrey, so much so that he engaged another *chef d'orchestre* to follow me. Finck then came to my rescue in arranging some band parts for the Palace, and as a reward I gave him the post just referred to, which led to his finding his way to his present unique position.

The other Guards' Burlesque fiddler was my esteemed friend George Byng.

George Bulkley Byng at the Alhambra was with my family in Dublin in the 'Seventies; with me at Manchester in the 'Eighties. A pupil of my mother and grandfather, he has found an honourable haven at the Alhambra. When I wrote two ballets for the Leicester Square house I found him my best friend.

Another discovery was Allen Gill—the oratorio conductor—whom I met periodically on my touring visits and was my 'cello at Plymouth Theatre Royal. He says that during one of those casual visits to that Devonshire town I said to him, “Try London, don't waste your time here.” He took my advice, and the result is well known.

CHAPTER IV

About Night Clubs—"The New"—Hughie Drummond—Blundell Maple—Sam Lewis—"The Gardenia"—"The Corinthian"—closing them up—Police raids—"Half world" humour—an attempted suicide—The Percy Street Club—The Dolaros—The Nell Gwynne—A thirty-five pound supper—"The Alsatians" in Oxford Street—Electing the members—A "mixed" marriage—a "missing" bridegroom—a disgraced bridal gown—Early Bohemianism—The Clubs of the 'Eighties—Harry Wilson—The Jewel Thief—From the Albany to Spinks in Piccadilly via Paris, St. Petersburg and Monte Carlo—A "plant" in Bond Street—A cheque trick—Dan Leno—The Prince of Wales sees two performances in one day at the same Theatre.

I AM not concerning myself with the night resorts of London of too early a period, but only with those which came under my ken in the 'Eighties. The Victorian "Cock and Hen" Club was an institution which came into existence in the early days after the 1872 Licensing Acts, the closing of Cremorne Gardens (now built over in Chelsea), the Argyll Rooms, and the night-houses of the Haymarket. They were generally a concession to the demand of the Bohemians who commenced their daily lives with supper after the theatre, and were directly connected with a time when a hotel-ridden London did not exist, the dinner hour began at 6 o'clock, and the theatre was over at 11 p.m. Other chroniclers have told of many of these institutions, but in the early 'Eighties they sprang up mushroom-like, with remarkable prodigality, some good, some bad, some indifferent.

Of the lighter tone was the "New Club" on the site of Evans' in Covent Garden—now the National Sporting Club—this latter started by Willie "Shifter" Goldberg, after the closing of the "Pelican." The New Club, however, as a Cock-and-Hen institution, tried hard to live on an exclusive *coterie*. Its secretary was Freddy Wellesley, related to the Duke of Wellington (he subsequently married Kate Vaughan); and Royalty, chaperoned by the Duke of Beaufort, and Lord Alfred Paget (nicknamed "Bangles" owing to his prevalence for going behind the scenes and presenting ballet girls with small silver "bangles") was a constant visitor. A small band, conducted by an eminent Italian musician, Signor Dami, discoursed sweet music, but the Club had too esoteric a *clientèle* for profit, and when one evening the late Hughie Drummond attacked the late Sir Blundell Maple over a furniture bill (which the Tottenham Court Road firm had "distraigned" for on the "rich young banker's" goods and chattels) it was seen that the mixture of the Upper Ten of Society and the lower five of Commerce would not work. "There's the bounder who put the bailiffs in on my poor old mother," shouted Hughie, and the Croesus of Tottenham Court Road after an apologetic bow to H.R.H. turned on his heel and left the room. "Well, Sam, how's money in Cork Street?" said Maple one night to the well-known financier. "All right, Blundell. How's clothes-horses in Tottenham Court Road?" was the quick reply. Hughie Drummond had a humour which in those days was considered smart. Personally, I never laughed even at the vulgarity of standing up in the Gaiety stall on a first night and frightening the audience by blowing a police whistle; or, as related in another instance, his entering the Pelican Club and clearing its long bar counter of three dozen glasses, smashing them on the floor, and calling for "a whisky and soda." The New Club subsequently tried artistic dances and private entertainments, but all of no avail.

Of a different class, but distinctly more amusing,

was the "Gardenia" in Leicester Square, where "La Goulue" was first introduced to this country under the management of Dudley Ward, who married a sister of the present Lord Esher, and where an Irish contortionist (La Belle Luceida—born in Limerick) went down on her stomach several times during the evening for a consideration to thread needles with her eyelashes, a performance she professionally gave at the London Pavilion. Here too a great many subsequently famous "comics" tried a hand at professional singing before they "topped the bill," to use the language of the class, at the principal Halls.

The "Gardenia" succumbed in time to the police, who were on the alert to try and suppress all night houses of this description, but they had some difficulty in getting a "case" as the Clubs Registration Act was not then on the statute-book. I got the hint early in the day about this raid and prepared to follow it up for journalistic purposes. I waited outside on the opposite side of Leicester Square till the police, about midnight, headed by Tildsley of Vine Street, entered—the Inspector arriving at the psychological moment when a lady was dancing a can-can barefooted, on a table in the centre of the room, dressed in soiled spangled evening dress with a glass of champagne in one hand, and conducting the band with the other. One by one the *habitués* were led to understand that they were under arrest, and all filed out to Vine Street, each in charge of a constable, but as they passed through, were forced to call out to the recording officer their name, description and address.

"Polly So-and-so, Actress"; "Minnie So-and-So, Actress"; "Cissie So-and-So, Milliner," and so it went on—"milliner"—"actress"—"actress"—"milliner"—to tiresome iteration, till the ninth or tenth *demi-mondaine* stirred by the untruthfulness of her colleagues, when the officer said: "What are you?" replied as follows: "I'm no bally actress or milliner—you bloomer—otherwise what would I be doing out here doing a high-kicker show in low-necked dress at this hour of the morning?"

I hurriedly drafted out two columns headed: "Come into the Gardenia, Maud" for the morning papers—and the old place was no more. One *habitué*, whose sense of shame was suddenly awakened by her arrest under such questionable circumstances, was so upset at her name appearing in the papers the next morning, that on the following Sunday she threw herself off Kingston Bridge into the Thames, but was happily rescued—and the experience having taught her a lesson, she married, settled down, and has been happy ever since.

"The Corinthian" in York Street, St. James', was next tried by John Hollingshead then retired from the Gaiety Theatre, and a huge army of real actresses, all in the front line of comic opera, were elected as honorary members. It would not be fair to mention their names but the "genuine" article would not stop up night after night, for the accommodation of an expensive wine list, and so the other sort of "actress" came along and continued its vacillating fortunes, until two neighbouring householders swore an information under what is called "Scot and Lot law," and the police shut it up. A prosecution followed, and the Club was finished. It was at this Club, when the famous "*Pas de Quatre*" was in vogue, that the Barn Dance was invented—a term then borrowed from America, but topically appropriate at the time, the male clients being all members of the new Barn Club, started at the back of the Comedy Theatre by Sir Robert Peel and others—another unsuccessful attempt to replace the old "Pelican."

The Percy Street Supper Club was one of the most respectably conducted of these nocturnal resorts, frequented as to its female membership by a class of light-o'-love that was ashamed to be associated with the commoner throng, and yet wanted some supper resort. It was run by "Ti" Dolaro "*Belasco*," husband of the beautiful Selina Dolaro, who made all London ring in the 'Seventies, and a relation of the late David "*James*" *Belasco* of "*Our Boys*" fame. The prices were modest, the food was good, and the smoking concerts often

boasted of names now high in the professional world. It is strange how these night Clubs were resorted to by many artistes to try their songs "on the dog" as the saying goes.

Other resorts of a like kind were "No. 11," in Regent Street, the "Waterloo" and "The Nell Gwynne"—a subterranean suite in Long Acre (said to have been patronized by Sweet Nell of Old Drury, but certainly often visited by "Sweet Jim" of Old Drury); the "Palm," in Oxford Street, and the "Spooferies" in Maiden Lane. All these establishments were kept open until 4 or 5 a.m. The programme at each was much about the same. A handful of musicians, twenty or thirty members, women of a more or less interrogative reputation, a respectable music-hall serio or two, a few handsome *blondes* or brunettes, principally the mistresses or housekeepers of commercial and young-blooded London, who, if they were seen in well-known resorts would "lose their boys," and who came into these so-called "Clubs" for a dance, a drop and a feed, with the knowledge that their particular protectors could not easily detect them and that the class of frequenters they encountered could not give them away in their "boys" sets. A supper to a popular music-hall "serio" one night given by a banker's son cost thirty-five pounds a head for ten people. The "Mug" paid for the champagne by corkage, and as he viewed—at 4 a.m.—the battalion of "dead 'uns," he wondered that so few could have in so short a time got rid of so many.

The male *clientèle* was recruited from actors, musicians, book-makers, music-hall artistes, all of whom contributed to the impromptu entertainments—which were such a strong feature of the night's programme. Rows often happened—in their early cups—a bottle flew, a scrimmage took place, a jealous "*inamorata*" accosted a lady friend, personal recriminations often ensued, but it was all settled with a forgiving good humour, which, if it was vulgar in its Bohemianism, was nearly always honest in its sincerity. The last of these houses

to go under was "The Alsations" in Oxford Street. This was run by a man named Harding Moore, and of all the people who dealt in this shady sort of business, he knew his work best. On Oxford and Cambridge nights the scramble by "non-members" to get in was riotous. "We're Cambridge men," they shouted one night. "Yes," said Moore, "I can hear it." "But can't we come in?" "No, not unless you become members." "What rot!" "Yes it is, but I can't see you all rushing into the witness-box to-morrow morning at Marlborough Street to give evidence in my favour if I am raided to-night!" It was right opposite my bachelor's quarters in Oxford Street, and as the food was excellent I often visited it for a belated supper (without always patronizing the "*Salle de danse*") what time my duties kept me late at the theatre. I will now give the form of procedure: Young gent arrives with lady—not a member—sorry—must go before committee, but on deposit of subscription, lady and gentleman can go in. Deposit for gentleman—five guineas entrance and five guineas subscription. Lady—three guineas—thirteen guineas to get a bit of supper!

Just about the Spring-time the proprietor started "Our Alsatian House-boat Club" at Hampton Court. Glorious fun. Beautiful week-end facilities. No questions asked. Subscription, two guineas; lady five, the whole course—twenty guineas. I have seen this farce come off dozens of times in any given week. An incident in the life of this institution, for it *was* an institution, was vividly impressed on my mind. A lady member of easy morality had an annuity of £600 a year. She fell in love with a handsome but penniless young Guardsman—and he with her; in the end he offering her wedlock. She arranged a wedding at St. George's, Hanover Square. His family, shocked, protested—all to no purpose. The eve of the wedding his bachelor friends suggested a farewell dinner at the Café Royal at 7.30. Dined, wine-d and primed well—at 11.30 he was hopelessly intoxicated. They drove him to Euston Station on

a pretence, placed him in a first-class sleeper, having previously taken a ticket to Aberdeen, gave the guard a fiver with instructions that if the passenger, who was booked to Aberdeen, did not wake up till twelve the next day, he (*i.e.* the guard) would have another similar donation. This artfully-arranged programme came off. The wedding bells at St. George's, Hanover Square, tolled in vain. The lady, disappointed and dejected, went back to the Continental Hotel, dined, whined and pined and then went on to the Empire Theatre in her *costume de nocces*, where she was the admired of the promenade for the evening. After which she wended her way back to the Continental Hotel for supper and wound up at 1 a.m. at the Alsatian Club; she played kiss-in-the-ring with a horde of her lady friends, who deliberately and intentionally tore every stitch of her wedding costume to shreds till she stood in the middle of the floor as nude as Eve in the Garden of Eden. A borrowed dress, a much over-wined woman, and a group of "sympathisers" was all that remained of an incident which I think is almost Balzacian in its reality. This incident has on more than one occasion been anticipated by the game of "spoof" in the old spooferies in Maiden Lane. "Spoof" is not a very intellectual form of humour, but there are many who remember its votaries, and its victims.

Two of the most frequent supporters of the Supper Club were a celebrated comedienne and her at one time ducal admirer.

The Duchess of course naturally objected to the attentions of the comedienne, and hearing that his Grace's insolvency was quoted as a reason for his indulgence in such unsavoury society—a curious sequitur, it will be admitted—the following correspondence took place:—

"The Duchess of — presents her compliments to Miss Bessie B— and wishes to state that if she will allow the Duke of — to return to his own home, the Duchess will pay all his debts and allow him £20 a week."

To which the comedienne replied :—

“ Miss Bessie B—— presents her compliments to the Duchess of —— and begs to state that she is now working the Pavilion, the Met., (*i.e.* Metropolitan Music Hall) and the South London, at £20 a turn, so she can allow the Duke £30 a week and he is £50 a week better off as he is.”

Other and more authoritative pens have dealt with this side of the general Bohemianism of London, but it was at its height in the 'Eighties and has been declining ever since. Flat life, motor life, week-end life, all this has destroyed the owl life of London. To go into the older clubs and be told the same old stories by the same old fogeys over and over again, cannot now be offered as an attraction to the neophyte in Town. The morose Arthur Mathison, the cheery “ Poet of the Strand,” H. S. Leigh, whose “ Carols of Cockayne ” will ever live—all such-like Bohemians, with an exception here and there, have passed away. When I first joined the battalion, we generally ended at Hart's or Rockley's—now Hummum's—early coffee-house in Covent Garden, which opened at 3 a.m., and gave us beautiful breakfasts of ham and eggs. Here, H. J. Byron, David James, George and Augustus Moore, the Brothers Mansel (who first brought comic opera to this country in “ Chilperic ” at the Lyceum) and poor Bill Terriss, who afterwards bought one licensed house, Hart's, as a speculation, E. J. Odell, F. C. Phillips (“ As in a Looking-Glass,”) and hundreds of others all pass my memory in jape and quip. The modern hotel and the greater journalism have helped to swamp small personalities, but the smug hospitality of these simple surroundings nursed giants in every art on a more liberal scale than exists now.

Perhaps one of the more noted West-end personalities of the last twenty-five years, is the genial, good-hearted, clever Harry Wilson of Bow Street, who just came on the scene when George Lewis retired from his personal attention to the

Criminal Bar at "The Courts of First Instance." There are few men who are held in such esteem by the Bar, Bench and Brotherhood as the popular lawyer, whose fund of anecdote, if he could ever publish a book, would make the country laugh—at least, that part of it which did not quiver. One good story—for I knew the man—will suffice. A client had lost some valuable heirloom jewels, and no matter what the cost, insisted on Harry personally pursuing the thief. So off to Paris went our friend—to find the bird had flown to Russia. So, later on we found him on his Sherlock Holmes quest, hundreds of miles in the land of kummel, caviare and vodka, and then back to the South of France, where he discovered some of the jewels in a Monte Carlo *mont de piété*. But there was one more valuable jewel than the rest, and he had instructions not to return without it. Now, Wilson was armed with warrants of search from Ministers of Justice and all other necessary "Open sesames" to official red-tape; so he ran his quarry to earth in a French county jail where he was detained awaiting trial on another matter. This particular mobsman was a rare London midnight oil bird; dressed with Silver King "spider"-like correctness, he patronized the stalls of every theatre and music-hall, dined at the Savoy, boxed at the Empire, finishing up his evenings at one of the many night Clubs. We all knew him by his Christian name—"Frank," without any hint as to his real identity; and he addressed us equally familiarly. So, when Harry Wilson was ushered into the cell in the French prison, the following conversation took place:—

"Oh! is it you, Harry? I know what you're here for—those jewels; but—not a single one will you get till you do something for me." Then he pulled out his watch.

"Now, this is a serious matter," insisted the man of law.

"Serious be blowed!" shouted the caged criminal. "Well, it's now ten o'clock and I won't budge a word, or give the slightest information,

until five, up to which time you've got to sit on that stool and tell me all about London. Do the same girls go to 'The Alsatians'? Have you been to the Café Royal lately? Does So-and-So go there still? etc. What's the new ballet like at the Empire? Out with it all! Here am I, caged up in this cubicle, and all you chaps are having a deuce of a time in London, and I'm not in it. Own up, Harry, own up!"

Wilson was adamant, but all to no purpose, till he promised that if a clean breast was made of the whole affair, he would not disclose the list of "previous" convictions with the local police, who would have used it in the forthcoming trial for which he was then detained.

This brought things to a climax.

"I've been three weeks trying to find the rest of those jewels," continued Mr Wilson. "I've scoured all Paris, ransacked Russia, turned Monte Carlo inside out, and can't get a clue. Where are they?"

"At Spink's, in Piccadilly!" triumphantly cried the jail-bird. And so it came about. Wilson took his instructions in the Albany and had to travel all over Europe to find something which all the time was at Spink's a few yards lower down.

In some of the lower dens which were often visited by the police, one met many people with strange careers. The wife of a swell "crook" I knew was a good American Roman Catholic. She was in a convent school, and on a mission of charity took her turn to visit the local jail to talk hope to the prisoners. This was a charitable duty, gone through regularly by the Sisters of Mercy, who instructed the pupils in their Christianlike work by these personal excursions. Under these circumstances, the new pupil fell desperately in love with a "détenu"—a handsome "bank" man. A "bank" man is an aristocrat. No pickpocket watch-snatching or small theft for him. He has a tone of his own. Nothing under a "Bank" or a big "Bond" coup will engage his attention. Her father was the Governor of the State, and she used

her influence with him to procure the fellow's release. A runaway match—her husband's return to his old games, and a life of misery followed. Separated from him for many years, he turned up in London and avowed repentance, and a wish to lead an honest life. She gave in and returned to him, in the meantime she having adopted an orphan whose fourteenth birthday was imminent. On the very morning of this event he signified his intention of ordering a birthday present for the little one, and the husband and wife repaired to a big Bond Street jeweller's, up to the door of which they drove in a previously-ordered swell equipage. The wife suspected nothing. Years of weary waiting—she had credited her husband's return and professed honesty as a *fait accompli*.

"I want a little diamond ring as a birthday present for this little girl." Such were the first words addressed to the obliging assistant behind a counter of jewels.

"Certainly," replied the elated shopman, who displayed two or three trays of glittering gems. A hurried survey, a few gems taken up and cast away disdainfully, a reference or two to the little girl—that was all the "benevolent" gentleman essayed to do for the moment.

"Yes—no—I don't like these. Perhaps a bangle, now, would be more suitable for the child. Could you show me some?"

Immediately the wife gave a huge shriek, which drew an excited crowd to the window, in front of which she swooned on the floor, falling an insensible mass of quaking flesh. Doctors were sent for, restoratives applied, and in the end the woman was taken to the carriage and driven home. She was soon brought to her senses.

"You are a silly ass," interjected her husband. "You spoiled the best haul I could have had for many a long day."

She saw the dodge. She opined that her husband's old traits had returned—he could not resist. The attendant's attention once diverted, the rings would have been "palmed." A similar ruse to this

in a jeweller's shop marks the first act of "The Great Ruby"—as fine a Drury Lane drama as ever was.

I saw a cheque trick at Bow Street once, which will put to shame any incident introduced in any play. A solicitor had a client—a friend of his wife's—who for many years had "housekept" for a bachelor old gentleman, who died intestate. Any thought of an allowance for the lady friend was out of the question; but in view of the fact that she had devoted many years of her life to his care and consideration, they allowed her £300 and £80 for small tradesmen's debts she had incurred on his behalf. The man of law, when he got the cheque, saw that it was made out to the lady herself, and he had determined that she was not going to get it all; so he informed her that he had been successful in getting her £180, and if she would call at his private house and dine with him, he would cash the cheque. In the meantime, he had noticed that the draft was on his own bank, drawn on a form of exactly similar size; so he had a second cheque made up for the lesser sum and slightly gummed to agree with the edges all round. This he placed right over the genuine document, and, inviting the lady into his study after dinner, turned the prepared cheque over with a quick "Please endorse this on the back." He immediately handed her £180.

Of course it will be seen that she had really endorsed the cheque for £380, which later on he detached, destroying the top forgery. The price of this little bit of drawing was eighteen months' hard labour.

Dan Leno and his wife first came to Drury Lane on a joint weekly salary of £28; on his death, his own salary was £240. Now, as a matter of fact, this is not so extravagant. It really only works out at £20 a performance, and there are many artistes who will only sing two songs at a concert for £80. Leno's golden asset was the domesticity of his humour. He took the ordinary things of daily life and wrote, or gagged, round them. He never

knew his part on a first night, and never learnt his songs. Once he sang a song on Boxing Night entirely at variance with every note of the melody in the band parts. How the house yelled and screamed with delight! "How like Dan!" they shouted. In early days of Harris, when the rehearsals dragged on to five o'clock in the morning, I once saw the little man sprawling on the floor on a Christmas Eve trying to write a cheque for £3000 to offer to Sir Augustus Harris to allow him to break off the engagement.

"I have just come from the Mint," said Augustus, one night, "and here's some new money for luck, Dan; one for you, and one for the wife, and—how many children have you?"

"Five."

"One—two—three—four—five."

"But," said Dan, "there's another on the road."

"Oh," said Harris, "you're a terrible man!"

"Well, Sir Augustus," quickly retorted Leno, "I don't smoke."

He once booked a concert with me at Bexhill and, knowing his forgetfulness, I sent him an early wire—

"You leave Victoria at eleven, arrive at one, and show at three. Lunch with me."—GLOVER.

to which he sent this reply—

"Buy another knife and fork. Bringing wife."—LENO.

A good theatrical story of the late King, when Prince of Wales, shows the exact amount of interest he took in anything on which he set his mind. When he started the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund, Henry Lowenfeld saw that it wanted a fillip, so he made the following diplomatic suggestion to high quarters:—

"My theatre is the Prince of Wales' Theatre. H.R.H. has never been to any one theatre twice in one day. If he will so honour me by coming on Saturday to 'A Pierrot's Life' in the afternoon,

and 'The White Silk Dress' on the same evening, I will, within twenty-four hours, send a cheque for five thousand pounds to his Hospital Fund."

The Prince was not slow to capture for his pet charity such a big fish; so that on Saturday the dual Royal event came off, and on the next night, Sunday, Charlie Levilly (Lowenfeld's manager) and myself dined at Gatti's and walked down to the "Daily Telegraph" office in Fleet Street with the promised five thousand pounds.

CHAPTER V

Restaurant London—A few sketches—The Brothers Gatti—Romanos—The end of Romanos's Bar—its varied *clientèle*—Phil May—His early life—A few corrections—"Phil"—As drawn by himself—Romanos's death—Mr. Alfred de Rothschild pays four guineas a bottle for brandy—Charlie Hawtrey and the new cashier—The Marchioness of H—— and the frustrated Guardsman's wedding—D'Oyly Carte and the Liverpool band.

THERE is no development which has been more marked in my time than Restaurant London. "Pagani's," in Great Portland Street, still existent, is not the same in its marbled splendour as the old haunt where Pellegrini decorated its walls with his wonderful *brochures*, even as Caruso does now. One remembers how "Ape," to whom the Rev. White, Chaplain of the Savoy, would not sit for a "Vanity Fair" "Man of the Day," went to Communion at the little church down Savoy Hill in order to thumbnail his features. Then there were the Café Royal, in its olden days, when the exiled Henri Rochefort led a *coterie* of Parisian sympathizers, and others, when Michael Maybrick (Stephen Adams)—afterwards the Mayor of Ryde, Isle of Wight—George Grossmith, senior, N. Vert, Hans Richter, Hollman the 'cellist, "Faustin," "Jimmy" Mortimer of "The Figaro," and dozens of others, made the "*aperitif*" hour a matter of infinite interest; Gatti's Adelaide Gallery, with the Brothers Agostino and Stephano never missing, attended by George R. Sims, Henry Pettit, Robert Buchanan and Augustus Harris; and the Gaiety

Bar (christened "Prosser's Avenue") by a comic singer, named Fred Hughes.

There were no two personalities more justly popular in the Bohemian and theatrical world than the Brothers Gatti, whose father and uncle first established the restaurant business at Hungerford Hall, now the site of Charing Cross Station. Here the very first of the restaurant orchestras, conducted by an Italian named Benvenuti, was started by the Gattis. When the station was built at Charing Cross, the Gattis moved to the Adelaide Gallery, where billiards and chess were the mainstays of the trade till the later and longer halled restaurant development asserted itself and bored its way through in all directions to the Strand. It really is wonderful how these two charming good fellows—of Swiss nationality, but later naturalized Britons—became such potent factors in the musical world, for in 1873 they ran some of the finest promenade concerts that one could wish to hear at Covent Garden, with Jules Rivi re as conductor. And later on Arthur Sullivan, Alfred Cellier, and F. H. Cowen, recently knighted, all ascended the conductor's "pup tre" with general success. The Gattis first entered the amusement business through sharing in the catering department, which led to their producing some very fine pantomimes at the Royal Opera House, this taste for theatrical management leading later on to the Adelphi, at which theatre they were associated in the long succession of Sims-Pettit dramas, which for their financial success and rough, honest, artistic work have not been equalled. The Gattis afterwards purchased the Vaudeville Theatre, and subject to sub-leases and tenancies these houses are still in the possession of the family.

Then there was the Criterion Bar, which attained an unenviable notoriety in the old days for encouraging a class of "Sportsman" who is now happily defunct, or at least has become such a scattered personality that he is barely recognizable. G. H. Macdermot, "the Great" Lion Comique, focussed such attention on this division in a song called

"Captain Criterion," that the song was suddenly withdrawn.

Darmstatter's (next door to Romano's); the Albion, which was closed in 1892—this latter one of the old Drury Lane landmarks, these were a few of the Bohemian haunts, some of which have passed away, and some have, Phoenix-like, risen in greater splendour. "Jimmy's," the old "St. James'" (now the "Piccadilly") was a feature in itself. It sheltered everything that was *blasé*, *bella-donna-ed*, and often beautiful in the lower strata of female Bohemianism. It filled a long-felt want; it occasionally filled Vine Street. Its closing hour made Piccadilly lively with that peculiar mixture of human frailty and London "Tom and Jerry-ism" which used to be one of the West-end sights of London for the average "young man up from the country." The great occasions for riot and rollick were Oxford and Cambridge, Derby, or other festive anniversaries. All this is now happily changed, and the West End at night is now possible of traffic for any respectable citizen without molestation or "mafficking."

One by one the landmarks of the old Bohemianism of the 'Seventies and 'Eighties passed away, as I have mentioned, unregretted, unhonoured, unsung; but not thus the fate of Romano's. Except for a few bars of a faintly-sung "Auld Lang Syne," in the early hours of a Saturday morning in June, 1910, the bar portion of this famous Strand Restaurant passed into the *ewigkeit*, and, save for a subterranean substitute in the grill-room, disappeared in its old historical form, "never to be heard of again." In this wise, it followed precedent. Romano's is one of the few survivors of the vanishing group of esoteric *clientèles* which commenced to go with the abolition of the Albion in Drury Lane and the old Occidental in the Strand (now the site of Terry's Theatre), the former proprietor of this latter house, Charles Wilmot, migrating to Islington, where he built the first suburban theatre—the Grand. The Gaiety Bar was moved to the other side of the road by an improving County

Council, and has since been converted into offices for the Mariconi System. The "Gorgonzola Hall"—which definition was given to the beautiful Adelphi Restaurant by "Dagonet"—now shelters the permanent London Publicity Bureau of a British Colony. This was once one of the most frequented of Bohemian houses, with its huge marble pillars like so many blocks of "Gorgonzola" cheese—hence the nickname referred to above.

"Romano's" had a curious history. In the late 'Seventies, a little Italian, named Romano, migrated from the Café Royal at Regent Street and opened, next door to one Darmstatter, a worthy *restaurateur*—the now famous house in the Strand.

The original caravanserai was not a very pretentious establishment—merely a few tables all down the one side of a long corridor, and a passage down the other—to reach which the customers had to traverse the "*brasserie*" department, once famous for its small aquarium in the window and a couple of goldfish, which were the subject of occasional humours at the lips of the local wits, who scintillated in the company of the *aperitif* patron.

And what customers they were! Dukes, marquises, baronets, racing-men, owners, jockeys, journalists, popular composers, etc., with the *crème de la crème* of the theatrical profession. It was here that the late D'Oyly Carte and his one-time Savoy partner, Michael Gunn, daily discussed the Gilbert and Sullivan problems over a "*filet à la Romano*" and a bottle of wine. It was here that "Teddy Solomon" and "Pot" Stephens hatched their "Billy Taylor" and "Claude Duval"—possible oppositions to the Savoy, and where Alfred Cellier celebrated the operatic success of his life ("Dorothy") on his return from Australia, to find that it was his formerly-produced-at-Manchester opera, "Nell Gwynne," with another libretto by B. C. Stephenson. H. B. Farnie and Cellier wrote "Nell Gwynne" for Boston Brown at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, in the 'Sixties, and it proved a fearful failure. Farnie modestly attributed the result to Cellier's music; Cellier, on the other hand,

retaliated that the non-success was due to Farnie's libretto. So this artistic liaison sought a literary and musical divorce, and Farnie found Robert Planquette, the "Cloches de Corneville" composer, to wed another score to "Nell Gwynne," while Cellier found B. C. Stephenson to attach another libretto to his music—"Dorothy." Cellier was evidently right, for as all the world knows "Dorothy" was a huge success, ran for years and made a fortune for all concerned, while "Nell Gwynne" spluttered out at the Avenue merely a "*succès d'estime*."

Many others of like artistic fame found Romano's to their daily liking, and associated themselves with the history of this *édition de luxe* of a Bohemian restaurant, before we ever heard of Savoy's, Cecils, Ritzs, *et hoc genus omne*.

It was here that poor Phil May was to be seen daily as he commenced the London portion of that brilliant career, which was ended in such a tragic fashion.

So many biographies have been written about my dear old friend, Phil May, and so many inaccuracies about his original start in life, that a few words may not be out of place as to his earlier beginnings, and our first meeting in 1881. Phil, of course, was a Leeds man, and like his great admirer, Arthur Collins, spent some time as an apprentice in theatre paint-rooms, in his case at Wilson Barrett's Grand Theatre in his native town of Leeds. At that time I was touring with "Don Juan Junior," a Royalty burlesque managed by Miss Kate Lawler—a niece of Mr. J. Warden, an old Dublin and Belfast acting-manager. Miss Lawler, "*en première nocces*," became a Mrs. Moon; her sister Annie married a Mr. Archie Keene, a solicitor, brother to Mr. Fred Kerr, the well-known histrion. A friend of Phil's, the present writer, and the black-and-white artist, all three fell in love with a beautiful girl, and at the time both our fears were that Phil would do us in at the wedding post on account of his facility for painting his love epistles with humorous thumb-nail sketches. I tried music notes, but to no purpose. The other fellow tried some rough drawings

(he, too, had a two-tie brush affection), but Phil for a time put our noses out of joint.

Personally, I did not preserve these earlier Phil Mays, but my old friend, Fred Storey, who was a member of the company, possesses an 1882 impression of Phil—by himself, and also a facsimile of the kind of envelope decoration to which I have referred, and a series of thumbnail sketches in which Phil himself, J. L. Toole, Irving and Storey figure.

To continue about Romano's. In music-hall song and West-end burlesque the little house soon became famous; for in addition to Gaiety burlesque references, Saville Clarke in his unique "Adamless Eden" skit, music-hall stars of the Vance and George Leybourne calibre, and others, brought the Strand Bohemian resort to the front, and the charming Sisters Leamar were wont nightly to inform all and sundry that something happened at "Romano's, as Papa knows."

The older resort some years ago was burnt down, and there was erected a larger and more commodious establishment, which gradually caught hold of a new Bohemian *clientèle*, encompassing much that is popular in the new Bohemianism in West-end fashion, and what an American writer described as "the best shirt-fronted brigade in Europe."

Romano died more or less suddenly. He had "organized" for himself a grand dinner at £3 a head, and to it came all his friends—wine merchants, cigar merchants, and others. It was a great night; but the aftermath to the proprietor was Kensal Green. When put to realization, the restaurant fetched £70,000, mainly through the good offices of the solicitor, Harry Wilson, and the executor. The cellars ("the best in London," as the "Roman" had it) realized £20,000 of this, as well they might; for Mr. Alfred de Rothschild thought it worth his while to pay four guineas a bottle for some of the 1789 brandy.

When poor Romano rebuilt the house, on its opening night, Charlie Hawtrey had a couple of

friends to supper, and in paying tendered a ten-pound note, out of which the cashier gave him change for a fiver. Hawtrey protested, and after many expostulations the little Roman came up to the actor's table profuse in his apologies to the indignant customer. "It make-a me vera sorry Missa Hawtrey you know-a the difficulty of a reopening what-a you call-a new staff, and worse-a of all what you call-a new cashier." "No, Romano," replied Hawtrey, "same old cashier," and out he walked.

Many a match between peer and peri has been hatched at the little house in the Strand, but the indiscretion of a couple of footlight fairies in the early 'Eighties frustrated a wedding which should at that time have caused what the papers call "a mild sensation." A friend of the Dowager Marchioness of — supping one night found himself entertaining the two coryphæes referred to, and in the quaffing of wine one of the ladies rather incautiously suggested the drinking of Flossie's, her companion's, health as to-morrow "on the quiet don't you know at the Registry Office" she was to wed young Lord — only son of Dowager Marchioness — at present in the Guards. This was a facer to the friend of the family, so he paid the bill and midnight found him knocking at the portals of the Marchioness' residence in Pont Street demanding an audience. The butler protested, the friend of the family insisted, and when at 1 a.m. he did interview her Ladyship it was only the importance of the message which assuaged her anger at being roused up at such an unseemly hour. Drastic measures had to be resorted to, and at eight the following morning an anxious mother waited on the Colonel of the young benedict's battalion, and for some reason or other that did not evince itself till later on, that young Lieutenant was placed under arrest and confined to barracks for three days. The wedding did not come off.

One of Romano's strongest supporters was D'Oyly Carte, particularly when the Savoy was opened—it being found much more convenient to

the new house. Carte often laughed when I reminded him of the following story.

At Liverpool in the 'Seventies he was conducting Lecocq's "La Fille de Madame Angot"; in the second act he lost his temper and made a deprecatory remark to the band. They immediately struck, and refused to finish the opera. The late H. J. Loveday, Sir Henry Irving's manager, whose wife, Miss Elinor Loveday, was one of the original "Josephines" in "H.M.S. Pinafore," was the local musical director, and being in the theatre he immediately went down into the band room, and remonstrated with the musicians, but all to no purpose. The audience were clamouring, the stage waiting, and it looked like returning the money to the public, when Loveday said: "Will you finish the opera with me as your conductor?" Loud cries of "Oh, yes, certainly, governor!" and the last act of "Angot" was conducted, not by D'Oyly Carte, but by H. J. Loveday.

When the band filed out after that evening's performance the following notice appeared on the hall board:

"The members of the Alexandra Theatre Orchestra are informed that their services will not be required after this evening.

"H. J. LOVEDAY."

This, of course, was the only way to deal with the matter.

D'Oyly Carte had a *penchant* at this time for writing one-act pieces—nearly always to the libretto of his then secretary, Frank Desprez, now the excellent editor of "The Era." One of these little *ballons d'essai* was called "Happy Hampstead," and was played a good deal during this tour.

CHAPTER VI

First experience as a Journalist—In Dublin—"Ireland's Eye"—"Dick" Dowling—Edwin Hamilton—Richard Pigott—The "Times" forger—Paris—The Moores—"The Hawk"—Its distinguished Staff—J. Huntly McCarthy, James Runciman, Fred. Greenwood, Clement Scott, G. Bernard Shaw, A. B. Walkley, R. S. Hichens, Charles Williams and F. H. Gribble—Changing "The Bat" to "The Hawk"—How we were Financed—Libels at Bow Street—The policy of Libel Actions—Jimmy Whistler and the Drury Lane row—The new halfpenny journalism—How Lipski was hanged—Chester Ives and the Parnell-O'Shea divorce—T. P. O'Connor—"The Sun"—Kennedy Jones, etc.—The Kennedy Jones prophecy—Gladstone—Labby—"The Evening News"—and an all-night vigil for "Truth" pulls—The Clement Scott debacle—Its early history—"Willy" and the cab story—About Lord Russell of Killowen—The thieves at my Hampton Court residence—First-night stories—How Lord Randolph Churchill resigned as a Cabinet Minister.

I FIRST became allied to journalism at the age of fourteen when advertising a dramatic club which had been started in my father's coach-house in Dublin, with an impromptu theatre and scenery painted by a budding young English theatre artist just then arrived, named Bruce Smith. And thirty years after he is painting the scenery and I am painting the music for Drury Lane's productions. I wrote dramatic paragraphs and gained publicity by appeals to three friendly quarters—Tom Sexton in "The Nation," Edwin Hamilton and Richard Dowling in "Ireland's Eye," two Dublin comic weeklies, and Richard Pigott in "The Irishman."

The first soon became one of the greatest nationalist orators of the fighting 'Eighties; the second a learned lyrist and pantomime author, now retired in the north of Ireland; the third a leading novelist; and the fourth, the suicide forger of the famous concocted letters, which occasioned the Parnell Commission. The last time I saw Pigott was in the witness box the day before he absconded from pending prosecution, and the last time I saw Parnell was on the day after, when he turned round Wellington Street and briskly walked with George Lewis (now Sir George) to Bow Street to obtain a warrant for the forger's arrest.

Dowling was a real wit. One day we were all four—Dowling, Edwin Hamilton, J. Fergus O'Hea, the artist, and myself—in "Ireland's Eye" office. Cash was short—the till was empty till an old lady entered and stated that she was "a subscriber from the first, and wanted to pay in advance a year's subscription"—huge excitement in inner office—but the lady added, "I should like to see the Proprietor or Editor and make a suggestion." It was mutually agreed that Dowling should accept proprietorial honour and interview the lady. "What can we do for you, madam?" The lady praised the paper. "It was excellent"—only had "one fault"—the cartoons, splendid as they were, "they always followed the event they were caricaturing." If they could "anticipate the subject," how much better it would be. "Madam," said Dowling, "we appreciate your kind interest in our welfare. At present, however, we find great difficulty in paying an Editor and artist, but I am afraid a prophet (profit) is beyond our means."

A column of theatrical notes signed "Beppo" in a paper called "The Citizen" was my next move, till I did the previously recorded work in Paris for the "*Entr'acte*," for which paper I had previously been its unpaid Dublin correspondent. Nothing journalistic turned up then till 1889, when I met the Moores, George and Augustus, in London, renewed an old family friendship and joined Augustus Moore on "The Hawk," as musical and

dramatic critic and general assistant at £3 a week, my evenings being spent at the Comedy Theatre in my musical vocation.

Now it was the habit at one time to level cheap sneers at "The Hawk," but it was one of the most brilliant organs that ever saw light. Let us see whom we had on the staff. Justin Huntly McCarthy, James Runciman (John A' Dreams), Frederick Greenwood, Clement Scott, G. Bernard Shaw (then "Corno di Bassetto"-ing in "The Star"), a newcomer, A. B. Walkley, R. S. Hichens (a young neophyte trying his hand for the first time fresh from David Anderson's Journalists' School in Chancery Lane), Charles Williams, the famous war correspondent, George Moore, the novelist, Francis H. Gribble, now equally eminent, Alec Knowles "Sir Affable," and many others. Not at all a bad staff.

The circumstances under which "The Hawk" came to be born were rather peculiar. For years a paper called "The Bat" had been run by James Davis—"Jimmy"—later on known as "Owen Hall," the author of "The Gaiety Girl" and other successes. "The Bat" was nearly always in hot water, and so it came about that "Jimmy Davis" disappeared to Paris and left an issue of "The Bat" at the eleventh hour on the point of its going to press under circumstances already referred to. The last issue of the paper was set up, but with instructions henceforward to "stop publication." This telegram was intercepted by Moore, who had contributed a large amount of the then set up "copy" of the about-to-be-stopped issue, and he, in conjunction with the rest of the staff, brought out "The Hawk," using all the matter of "The Bat" but merely changing the title, etc., so that instead of the paper closing publication, it simply continued to appear under another name. The immediate financial support necessary as far as Moore was concerned was provided in this way.

Moore had just had one of his many rows with people—in this particular instance Clement Scott, whom Moore had been lampooning in a paper

called "Society." Scott insisted on Moore's dismissal from the Olympic Theatre as a condition of his entering it on a first night for "The Daily Telegraph." Result: *Moore v. Clement Scott*; action for damages, etc.; the subsequent intervention of a mutual friend, that good, kind, peace-maker, Wilson Barrett, and "C.S." paid over a solatium to Moore of several hundred pounds. It so happened that these funds had just arrived about the time "Jimmy" Davis' "stop publication" wire arrived, so on such short capital he ran the paper for some months, till a misunderstanding occurred with a co-proprietor he had taken in, when he resigned.

Three months later there came to him a stranger, my friend, F. M. "Pelican" Boyd, who found another financier, on condition that he, Moore, returned as editor, so that on Christmas Eve, 1893—on behalf of Mr. W. Morley Pegge, we bought the paper for £325, made it "hum" for six months, and then a Mr. Frank Harris purchased a half-share for £3500, Pegge and Harris ultimately selling out to a syndicate for £12,000.

To the outside public the paper was seemingly always in trouble, but we seldom got caught. Bow Street saw us once a month regularly, but we never had to climb down, although if we were in the wrong we acknowledged it nobly, and we were never committed for trial. Once we went there for having libelled a new invention called "Linotype." Paraphrasing a popular Gaiety song (sung by E. J. Lonnen), the attack was headed "'Ave a Line-o-Type a-Long-o'-me." When we arrived at our accustomed seats in front of the dock, we made two horrible discoveries: first, that the magistrate was Sir James Vaughan; and second, that the principal witness against us was Mr Jacob Bright, that same magistrate's brother-in-law, the chairman of Linotype Company, a brother of the famous Tribune John Bright. Besley, Q.C., bullied, ranted and raved, but all to no purpose—George Lewis—for us turned everything inside out, and after a short adjournment, the Prosecution withdrew. The attack

was not against Linotype per se, but merely in the compositor interest. How wrong we all were is now evident, judged by the enormous position that all mechanical type-setting apparatus occupy in the typographical world. On another occasion, a gentleman got a "*fiat*" against us. A "*fiat*" just then became the necessary authority to a libelled plaintiff before he could obtain a criminal summons for libel. It is granted for the Attorney General by a Judge in Chambers. Possessed of one of these judicial authorities, an aggrieved person walked into the Gaiety bar, where he met another personality, whose "*previous*" had also been exposed. "I've got a summons to-day against that 'Hawk' chap," valiantly remarked the successful litigant. "I'll give him chokey—and that's what you ought to have done." "Look here, my fine young fellow," was the laconic reply from the likewise attacked, but "*nolle-prosequi*" sport, "don't you be too 'asty. What's the odds? This 'awk' has called you a dirty thief—well, what of it? Who reads the beastly rag? Nobody. Not fifty people in the world that we know. You're only called a thief to fifty people, twenty of whom don't know you and never will—very well then, why take the paper to Bow Street and get yourself published as a scoundrel in every paper to-morrow morning in the United Kingdom? Not me, my good friend, not me! Let sleeping dogs lie." This advice took. The Attorney General's *fiat* was not used, and the summons never applied for.

Really, the paper might never have prospered were it not for its enemies, who consistently advertised it at their own expense, but the "Jimmy" Whistler affair was our great and real "boom." I had written an article on the financial management of a "*Fête Française*" scandal, and into it quite innocently imported the name of a gentleman I had never seen, known, or heard of—Mr. E. W. Godwin—and this at the suggestion of an interested tradesman. Mr. Whistler, who married Mr. Godwin's widow, a fact of which I was ignorant, resented this reference. So he hied him to the Beef-

steak Club to parade his grievance amongst others to a sympathetic actor friend, who also had nursed a grudge against the paper. There and then the Drury Lane incident as to how the Editor was to be ridiculed, was stage-managed. It was the first night of "A Million of Money," and in the foyer Whistler walked up to the Editor and with a penny cane tapped him three times on the shoulder crying: "Hawk, Hawk, Hawk, I chastise you!" in the excitement, which only lasted a few seconds, the great impressionist fell down, and my epigrammatic friend, the clever musician Algernon Lind, summed it up tersely in the next day's "Globe" with:—

A KNOCK-TRUN IN BLACK AND BLUE

Only a word in the foyer,
Only a form on the floor;
A popular painter went home feeling fainter,
And the stalls held one less and one Moore.

Not so Moore and I. We went home, "did it" well, and were rewarded by a pyramid of enterprising journalists who lined the stairs of our business premises, 172 Strand—waiting for advance "pulls" of what we had to say on the matter, much to the inconvenience of Alfred Gibbons of "The Lady's Pictorial," whose offices were on the first floor.

Let me do Moore credit. He had a great insight into the real facts of a case. He could tell any man on earth the right way to do a thing, but in his own case never achieved the desired end. He was a Roman Catholic, and in the Roman Catholic Home Secretaryship of Henry Matthews (now Lord Llandaff), a murderer named Lipski was condemned to be hanged. Lipski was a walking-stick maker in Whitechapel. A sordid story of drink, adultery and jealousy, ended in his murdering his poor wife, by pouring nitric acid down her throat. W. T. Stead, on the "Pall Mall Gazette," raised a great cabal as to the improbability of the murderer's guilt, suggested Lipski's wrongful conviction, and the convict's solicitor (the Home Secretary having

refused a reprieve) went so far as to send a telegram in the following terms direct to Queen Victoria at Osborne :—

“Innocent man to be hanged on Tuesday. Pray your Majesty’s clemency for a few days. New evidence forthcoming.”

To every one’s surprise, but in consonance with the sweet nature of the great White Queen, Lipski—behind the back of the Home Secretary—was reprieved for a week. Moore, believing in his guilt, went straight to the “Evening News,” and obtained a commission to investigate the whole thing. Every day for the anxious seven days the “Pall Mall” brought out fresh facts to prove the innocence of the murderer, and Moore sat on the doorstep for every new edition of Stead’s paper, with which he cabbed it to Whitechapel to gain rebutting evidence which he published in a later edition of “Evening News.” Lipski wrote a beautiful letter to the “Pall Mall” thanking them for their advocacy, and promising to make new walking-sticks for all the staff when he was liberated. In the end Moore’s facts prevailed. The Queen refused to interfere further, and the hangman did his work.

On the scaffold Lipski confessed that he murdered his wife.

Chester Ives was a real live entity in newspaperdom, but somehow or other he missed his shot—ultimately taking his own life in pathetic circumstances. In Parliamentary history he will be handed down as the machine which broke Parnell. The real reason for the Parnell debacle was apparent to everybody, but it was a wonder to the world that what had been a *secret de polichinelle* for many years, should have come so suddenly as a bolt from the blue. But there were vindictive influences at work. It was a carefully and diabolically manœuvred *coup*. It was decided that some one should be sent to interview Captain O’Shea for “The Evening News,” and the exact questions and posers which would force O’Shea’s hand were all

carefully arranged beforehand. I do not blame Ives, to whom the duty was entrusted. He was a real American journalist out for blood, but the failure of the Parnell Commission had to be followed up with some sort of a *coup d'état*, and so it came about that the best and most "honourable" way of doing it was through the divorce court. This story may invite any amount of contradiction—I don't care if it does. I have Ives' own *ipse dixit* for its absolute truth. I knew Chester for many years, and he was a great and good friend.

It was during this time that Mr. Labouchere and Gladstone had their great row over the non-inclusion of "Labby" in Gladstone's 1886 Cabinet, and many were the efforts made to get advance "pulls" of the hearty "Truth" battle of words between the two men. The late Horace Voules, the actual editor of "Truth," had allowed me to be useful to him in an important theatrical scandal case, and I received a card from him to go to Wymans', the printers in Great Queen Street, to get "not before 3 a.m.," a pull of the pages of the interesting war of political polemics between Labby and Gladstone. And this resulted in my sharing half a doorstep one night with Sir J. H. Dalziel (the Member for Kirkcaldy, and present editor of "Reynolds'") who as London correspondent for several Scotch papers, was on a like bent. I was promised ten pounds for my "pull," and I flew back to the "Morning" with triumphant cocksureness with the copy, for my prize, but some one had been before me, and I found the article fully set up on my arrival. Ives, nevertheless, kept his word, and paid me that "tenner."

The "Morning" wandered on till we all found ourselves at the "Sun," with T. P. O'Connor as editor, Kennedy Jones, myself, and others of the "Morning" staff. I was introduced and appointed as musical critic through Boyle Lawrence, with a similar position on the "Weekly Sun" at a fixed salary, and the run of the office for "specials" and "extras." One night I caught an "extra." A man called at a flat to see a lady of leisure—she

was out—a pretty maid opened the door, the man followed the maid into the dining-room, saying, "You'll do as well," and tried to assault her. She grasped the table-cloth, which had a lighted paraffin lamp on it, the result being that the woman swooned, the lamp set fire to the room; the man, frightened, ran out of the flat, locked the door for supposed safety, and when the brigade arrived, the poor girl was roasted and charred to death. I heard the inquest was to be suppressed, and saw a good "scoop." I cabbed it to Whitefriars Street, straight to the "Sun" office, rushed in and burst open the door of the newsroom to find Louis Tracy and Kennedy Jones in solemn conclave. I tried hard to "stop press," but to no purpose.

"Come with us," said Kennedy Jones, "we want you." And then we migrated to the "Rainbow," where both Jones and Tracy showed me a letter they had just received, the purport of which is quoted below. They had both just emerged from "Answers" office, where having explained to a fair-haired young gentleman the following facts—that the Harry Marks Syndicate had decided to sell the "Evening News," a meeting had been called to conclude the sale (I think it was at £22,000 all in). The original idea that these two pioneers had, was to have purchased the paper and amalgamated it with the "Sun," and thus there would not have been any evening Conservative halfpenny organ. The capital of the "Sun," however, was short, and in order not to lose an opportunity "Answers" was resorted to on the advice of a friend, who said "Alfred always wanted to dabble in something daily-like." Well, the two letters were the same in result. Louis Tracy (who had been the acting-editor on the "Sun") was appointed as editor—and Kennedy Jones as news editor of the "Evening News," both "at a salary of £10 a week and one-eighth share of the profits for seven years." Signed "Alfred Harmsworth." "K.J." shortly afterwards became Editor.

I do not know any more good-natured, dominant, matter-of-fact, interesting and sympathetic person-

ality than this Kennedy Jones. And the boy evidently was father to the undoubtedly great man—because as every one knows, his has been a Napoleonic guiding hand in the greatest revolution possible in the modern Newspaper world. I first met him on the "Birmingham Daily Mail." I wrote the music of a play produced at Andrew Melville's Grand Theatre—Melville, father of the present Lyceum Manager. Jones did the dramatic criticism. I eagerly sought the morning-after paper for the required notice. It was short, sharp, terse and to the point. "This play is in four acts," wrote the local critic, "the villain wears brown boots in the first three acts. If he changed them to black in the fourth the play might have a chance of success."

During an influenza attack while on the "Sun," I was "*hors de combat*" at my flat in Oxford Street. Kennedy was the only member of our staff who braved possible infection to come and see me in my convalescence. Sitting there one night, the two of us talked for hours of our future selves. Two men—a four-pound-a-week musical critic and his six-pound-a-week news-editor colleague—there we sat for hours and settled the affairs of the nation from our own point of view. I was very strong in those days on the journalistic theory of compelling theatrical managers to do what "we," *i.e.* the newspapers, wanted. We talked it out for hours till Jones closed the argument and interview with these words :—

"James, my sole ambition in life is to sit in an office in Fleet Street, press a button to every newspaper all over the country, and direct them to tell Lord Salisbury we want him to resign."

The most interesting battle in which I fought as a "hidden force" was the Clement Scott debacle. Perhaps the greatest critic of the Victorian era, Clement had the heart of a child, and the tender nature of a woman. He also had tempers and moods which could not be justified; but since his death we have felt his loss, and even many who had suffered from his scorpion pen admit that the amount of good he did to the drama outweighed

any of his small prejudices. He was taken off his high pinnacle in the public mind, and in the great organ of which he was a shining ornament for many years, by a sensational trick which had the hollow ring of insincerity and bunkum right from the very beginning. Supposed to attack the morality of the women of the theatrical profession in an interview, he said nothing more than he had written under his own signature in "The Hawk" on August 7th, 1888, where his strength was so great that he could not be attacked, but personal spite had intervened, personal grudges had to be worked off, even so far as turning the occasion of a complimentary send-off supper to a well-known actor into a vehicle of attack and abuse and attack again. "C.S." of course had his faults, but there are always ways and means of doing the right thing, and in my humble opinion this was not the right way to do it—but let that pass. I am only concerning myself with the many humorous interludes of this great sock and buskin row. A meeting of all the leading theatrical managers at a private house passed several hours in discussing the exact kind of protest, punishment and excommunication which must be dealt out to the offending critic, unanimously agreeing that he was not to be allowed into any London Theatre until he had eaten the leek and lunched in sackcloth and ashes. As an "*hors d'œuvre*" the "something-with-burning-oil-in-it" treatment was suggested. Unanimously carried, all save one. A moody unit sat in a corner; listened carefully to everything, but uttered not one word till he was appealed to in the end:—

"You've said nothing, Willy," queried one of the party to the actor, husband of one of the drama's finest Matrons. "What's in your mind?"

"Well," said the silent one, "I was just thinking that when the crucifixion *séance* is over, there won't be enough cabs on the rank outside to take all us actor-managers to 15 Woburn Square (Scott's residence) to assure 'Clemmy' that 'we' were not agreeable to the resolution, and only joined the others *pro forma*."

And so it was, four cabs drove up to Scott's house that evening, and each occupant assured "my dear Clement" of his own absolute neutrality in the matter. As the actor's good lady, who tells the story, remarked: "I was never so proud of Willy in my life."

Shortly afterwards, Clement explained away his references to the theatrical womanhood of England, but for some time he was in sad straits because of the "D.T.'s" refusal to allow him to do his work. "They say that the managers won't let me into their theatres, Jimmy, and they can't afford to have the paper denied admission, what am I to do?"

"Well," I suggested, "sit down and write a nice note to the managers telling them of your return from your long holiday, your anxiety to see the latest play, which you are so sorry was produced in your absence, that you are shortly resuming your work—and tell me of one refusal." Of course, as I anticipated, not one. Every London manager was "glad" to hear of his return, and with the coupons all torn off the various tickets presented to him, Clement was able to disprove the heresy that he was "debarred at every box office door." May I say that there was one manager to whom he did not write, but even this was discreetly arranged through a mutual friend, Edmund Routledge, always a friend of the theatre.

My journalistic experiences led me once to a short, sharp and sweet interview with Sir Charles Russell (Lord Killowen)—future Lord Chief Justice of England. I was a witness in one of his cases, and was invited to the eleventh hour conference which he always had with his client in his big briefs. His Junior was a Mr Lionel Hart, then a rising young Barrister, son-in-law of Sir George Lewis, and afterwards the literary adviser to Sir Beerbohm Tree. Russell cross-questioned me as to the various points to which I was to testify, and then, turning to his client, remarked, "Anything more, Mr —, before we go into Court?" "Oh, nothing," said Mr M—, "you have heard of the so-and-so incident?" (referring to some new

“fact” which he then related). “Good heavens, no!” “But I told Mr Hart,” pleaded the client, “a week ago.” To this the future Lord Chief took off his wig, threw it in his Junior’s face, and shouted, “Mr Hart, why the — was I not told of this before! It alters the entire scheme of my defence!”

Carrying newspaper office humour into my real life, often led me into little surprise “facetious” acts which recoiled on myself.

When I first lived at Hampton Court, the local Post Office closed at eight every night, and there was no telephone service—this in 1899—so unable to get certain landowner interests to grant the necessary wayleaves, I was piqued at being cut off from London every night at eight which necessitated many weary, useless night journeys, all of which might easily have been done by wire or ‘phone. Having failed, therefore, in every legitimate endeavour to arouse a sentiment of commercial spirit in local Rip-van-Winkleism, I thought a little strategy—or, as I thought, “humour”—would prove useful. I therefore published and issued this poster, in black and white, all over the village:—

IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO BURGLARS, CRACKSMEN, AND THOSE INTERESTED
IN THE HOUSEBREAKING INDUSTRY

An area of five miles in this district is cut off from all communication with the outer world after eight o’clock every evening. The undersigned wishes to draw attention to the exceptional facilities thus provided for practice in the above art. No Police Station near for three miles.

By order,
JAMES M. GLOVER
His Mark
X

Now, it so happened that about this time a

pretty extensive list of my wedding-presents had appeared in the local Press. I was suddenly taken away to Eastbourne by Arthur Collins to work on the pantomime, only to be recalled the next day by my wife :—

“Burglars attempted to get into house last night; do come back.”

So back I hied me to Hampton Court, to find it was only too true; but a new collie dog (alas! poor Prince) woke my wife up, and she rushed to the window just as the marauders, anticipating that the dog's barkings would rouse the house, were closing the gate quietly. “I'll call the police!” shrieked my wife. But they only laughed, and one, more daring than the rest, shouted out as he politely latched the garden gate, “Tell old Jimmy we only called in response to his kind invitation!” The incident, of course, caused a small sensation in the district, and shortly afterwards the unwilling ones gave way, and the district obtained its telephone service.

Of course, impromptu humour of this sort is very prevalent on the stage, but one does not, however, look for it “off” quite so frequently. First nights are generally good times for the ready-made “wit”—notably in the gallery—during serious situations.

It was about 2 a.m. when the curtain rose on a version, many years ago, of “Monte Christo,” at the Adelphi. The scene was a darkened bedroom, an old man discovered sitting beside a bed with a lighted candle. Voice from the gallery: “I say, mister, we're not keeping you up, are we?”

And yet another sly shaft enlivened a dull wait in a version of “Carmen” at the Gaiety. Miss Olga Nethersole on the first night was so “reserved” in her love-making that after a long scene with Don José a pittance shouted out: “I say, missis, are we supposed to hear all this?”

But a serious *contretemps* may be a step to fame, as on the first night of “The Trumpet Call” at the Adelphi, when a then unknown actress stood on the

stage during a long love-scene. In the middle of the dialogue all her under-petticoats slowly, but surely, slipped to the ground. She calmly lifted them up, held them by her side, and went on with the scene. The papers the next morning wrote columns about the *sangfroid* of the newcomer—Mrs Patrick Campbell.

In my Fleet Street days I had so many experiences which are merely local, but in the chaff of printer's ink, "sticks" of stuff, "cuts," and other small humours of the composing room, one or two serious items crop up. One of these was of very great portent at the moment. I had intended waiting one night at "The Times" office for a friend then employed in the sub-Editorial Department. Our mutual interest was early-morning breakfast at one of the many Fleet Street caravanserais which catered for the early-morning ink-slinger. My friend entered, and told me to "bide a wee," but to my intense chagrin he did not—nor did any person—emerge from that office till 5 a.m. A gentleman's carriage alone blocked the way, standing still, a shivering coachman, and an equally frozen-up horse. Inside that "Times" office was Lord Randolph Churchill, who, contrary to all etiquette, precedent and common decency, had given to "The Times" the first announcement of his resignation as a Cabinet Minister, he being then Chancellor of the Exchequer. "The Times" people had locked everybody in till all the other papers had gone to Press so as to prevent the possibility of a leakage. And so it was on the morning of Thursday, Dec. 23rd, 1886, "The Times" exclusively announced:—

RESIGNATION OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

and Queen Victoria did not know.

CHAPTER VII

Augustus Harris, Knight—First meeting—He commences stage-management on his own—Lord and Lady Dunlo—Harris “reforms” the music-hall—At the Palace—How it emerged from bankruptcy to bullion—With Harris at Drury Lane—How Arthur Collins saved a situation—Operatic experiences—How Jean de Reszkè “drew” on his own—Sending Jean “a few seats”—Jean’s retaliation—He takes a theatre and produces a play in forty-five minutes—Running three opera-houses a night—How great artistes sang at Windsor without salary—The Legion of Honour—“*Quelque chose du bon*”—A medical certificate—Punting on the river after Melba—H.R.H. and the omnibus box—Harris’ ruse—Arthur Collins, stage-manager—Arthur Collins, Colonel—Amusing *contretemps*—Queen Victoria watches Arthur Collins set the scenery—Mascagni at Windsor—Conducts at a music-hall—How Plançon was “presented”—and a *prima donna* was “not”—Conan Doyle and “Waterloo”—How Harris got out of a tight corner—General operatic remarks.

A BOY hanging on to my mother’s skirts—she the harpist to those Mapleson and other opera companies which visited Dublin in the ’Seventies, of which visits I have already spoken—I first met Augustus Harris when he came to the Dublin Theatre Royal as stage-manager for Signor Campobello (Mr. Campbell, a Scotch vocalist). Campobello had married the great Madame Sinico, and with the scattered battalions of Mapleson’s and Gye’s London forces, had formed the Campobello-Sinico Opera Company, with entirely new dresses by Madame Auguste (Harris’ mother), who kept a

costumier's emporium in Wellington Street, Strand. This lady's two sons—Augustus as stage-manager, and Charles as "*regisseur*"—were attached to the operatic tours mentioned, with power to seize the costumes in case the hire-purchase agreements were not faithfully kept up. I mention this because the foreclosure actually took place at Rochdale, when Augustus and Charles Harris each sat on a large basket of the costumes and refused to allow them to be opened or any costume used till some instalment was paid.

This was the first time that Augustus Harris had a free hand in Italian or any opera (early experience of which he had learned from his father, Augustus Harris the elder). The manner in which the young stage-manager rated a Madame Piccioli, who did the sleep-walking scene in "*La Somnambula*" in a modern white evening-dress and high-heeled shoes, left a big impression on my youthful mind. (Something similar happened when Mrs. Patrick Campbell in "*The Bondman*," at Drury Lane, as a poor child of a hard-up Manx peasant, wore high-heeled bronze French shoes in the first act). I next met Augustus Harris twenty-five years later, when "*Druriolanus*" came into an opera box at the Comedy Theatre (we were playing "*Jane*") with Lord and Lady Dunlo (afterwards the Earl and Countess of Clancarty), who had that day settled their matrimonial differences. The lady, after a tour as "*Belle Bilton*" (her maiden name) in Harris' "*Venus*" Company, lived happily ever afterwards with the Earl till she succumbed to a dangerous operation.

As children singers in Charles Bernard's Juvenile "*Cloches de Corneville*" Company, the two Sisters Bilton did tours with me in the chorus and in a pantomime or two, till as maturer artistes they startled the town with :—

"Fresh, fresh, fresh as the morning,
Sweeter than new-mown hay."

From this time I used to meet the Drury Lane

manager often at the Pelican, at Covent Garden balls, etc., and ultimately he offered me the joint and managing musical directorship of the Palace Theatre, which was then on the verge of completion. To reform the music-hall (he had already had experience at the Empire), to give a better entertainment, all this was in his mind, and journalistically I propagated the "great" gospel. He started the Palace with a band of fifty-six and a one-act drama called "The Round Tower," by Justin Huntly McCarthy. How this was howled off the first night, how "the mad policy of a one-act drama in the music-hall" was scouted by the Press, how the thousand infuriated first-nighters standing on the wet December day from 8 a.m. till 7 p.m. for their "turn," only to find all the seats booked, and how they stormed the circles and took forcible possession of the house, and cat-called everything, is now history. The Palace dawdled on; but a ballet by Cecil Raleigh and myself, stage-managed by Arthur Collins, kept the doors open till an eventful night, when Kilyani's "*Tableaux Vivants*" drew the town, filled the theatre's coffers, and turned its fortunes. Old Charles Morton, brought over from the Tivoli (with a year's salary deposited in advance at his bank), did his very best to cancel this turn; but Harris was adamant, and some of the directors who had seen the "*Tableaux*" in Paris also stood firm, with the result we all know. It was strange that the real success should have come owing to one of the turns he had originally booked, at the time when Sir Augustus Harris had relinquished all practical control in the management.

I migrated from the Palace to Drury Lane and opened with "A Life of Pleasure," the principal scene of which was a great Maxim gun demonstration. This sensation startled London, and on the first night Harris had not a single idea how it was to end. He had this habit of leaving things. Collins fished out some old scene "Cloths" from the cellar, made a ravine spanned by a bridge, placed a couple of Maxims (one each side of the

stage) and with "Lights out" and Cimmerian darkness let go the guns, which Harris had never seen rehearsed. The effect was magical, and to no one so much as to Harris, who, standing in the wing, suddenly lowered the curtain and in a moment was in front bowing acknowledgments to as huge a call as I ever heard. This play was followed by one of his greatest failures, "Robinson Crusoe," the only Boxing Night he ever missed at Drury Lane in his thirteen years' régime. Everything tended to failure. Harris was sickening fast, Henry Pettit was taken ill, and died on the Christmas Eve, a fact which drew away the attention of his Brother-in-law, Harry Nicholls, who was writing the pantomime. The shock told so much on "Druriolanus," that he took to his bed for eight weeks—the first of his "warning" illnesses.

The opera season at Covent Garden was my next move, and not being allowed to conduct during the "Grand" season there (although "Faust," "Cavalleria," and "Carmen" and other works fell to my lot in the "off" time) I, to use Harris' term, became "*Administrateur Musicale*." This meant anything—taking the superfluous singers to the Crystal Palace or Brighton in "Flying matinées"—drawing cheques, translating the contracts (all in French), and generally making myself useful—in fact, anything that came along. A short speech in front for a voiceless *prima donna*—carrying a message to the omnibus box used by the Prince of Wales—accompanying a song for a "trial audition"—writing off a few paragraphs for the Press—all was grist which came to my mill. This opera season was the first in which my friend Neil Forsyth had absolute control in front at Covent Garden—excepting in the initialling of the free list, F. G. Latham having just left. This initialling business Harris insisted on doing himself for one season only, and it was in this capacity that he administered his famous rebuke to Jean de Reszkè. Jean insisted on opening in Massenet's "Werther"; it was a failure, but the famous tenor would not admit it.

Now one of my many duties was to assist in recording the number of "appearances" of each artiste for the future programmes, and keeping a check of the number of nights that each singer was to sing; so on Harris' suggestion we put up Jean de Reszkè and Calvé in "Faust" for the Saturday following the failure of the "Werther." I told Jean as I was directed. He protested, said that he must have a second "Werther"—his idea was that a single performance would be admitting failure—adding, "I will draw, if the opera doesn't." Harris consented *malgré lui*, but was very sarcastic about Jean's "I will draw." I generally had authority to open all letters up to midday in case anybody fell ill, so when on this Friday Harris came down and said, "Anything important, Glover?" I quickly replied, "Only a letter from Jean for his usual *faveurs de claque*." This was a sort of courtesy to every "star," that they should have a few seats well-distributed in the house for their friends, to lead off the applause and "encores" at the right moment. I could not sign them; at this period Forsyth could not sign them either, and Harris was annoyed at the suggestion when Latham left that he did not personally manage his own business and so he insisted on personal signature of all free seats. So to Teddy Hall, the veteran box-office keeper—great Radical and friend of W. E. Gladstone—the *impresario* resorted, shortly returning, his arms bulging with "paper." "I'll show him what he can draw on his own," and dumped a huge cargo of free tickets on to the table. Now, twenty-four hours before a Jean de Reszkè Saturday night, nearly every bookable seat ought to have been sold—in some operas at premium price; but "Werther" was dead as an attraction, and when the manager went to the Box Office the sheet was quite bare, over and above the usual Saturday night season subscriptions. The opera director sat down, called for some huge envelopes into which he hastily and nervously shoved the bundle of "*billets de faveur*," and then wrote his own letter:—

Mon cher Jean,

Avec plaisir. Voila quelques billets pour demain soir. Si vous auriez besoin d'autres écrivez un petit mot Je vous envoie 140 Fauteuils, 150 Balcons, et soixante amphitheatres.

AUGUSTUS HARRIS

"I'll show him," he muttered with a wink, "what he can draw." I remonstrated. I advised my master that Jean might retaliate. Artistes after all are only human, and I saw in my mind's eye that as we were bound to have the great tenor for several years a little diplomacy would be necessary as trouble could easily and naturally arise. This actually came true; the fact that Tamagno had made a success in the interim lent additional flame to the fire.

The next season, at the end of its third week, when we were very hard up for a good tenor and really depending on Jean to pull us through, Jean wired that his voice was "fatigued," and that he was "*en vacance*" at Mont Dore, and to Mont Dore poor "Druriolanus" had to repair in August to catch the Polish Tenor and make his promise for the following season, which he did, a promise he faithfully kept. Artistes who depend on uvulas, the caprice of glandular affections or the varying laryngitis troubles must be humoured, and nobody knew this better than Augustus Harris, and that any sort of doctor's certificate excuse would carry any contract either way. But he wanted his little joke—he got it—and paid for it. Jean was a real good sort and a genuine humourist. Often to while away a long *entr'acte* he and Edouard or Prançon would sing in their broken English "Annie Rooney" or "A Little Bit off the Top" on Juliet's tombstone in the last act of Gounod's opera.

Harris, Collins and myself one Saturday evening were going out to dinner. "Where shall I take you two boys to dinner?" queried our host. "Don't care," we replied. "Well," said Sir Augustus, "let us go somewhere near the Princess', I own the copyright of a play called 'Jean Mayeu.' The

Company opens there to-night." So we all wandered up to Frascati's. We arrived at 6.50 and ordered three chops. At seven, James Crowdy, the then lessee of the Princess', came in. "Hello!" said Harris. "We're coming to see your show to-night." "The devil you are!" said Crowdy, "I don't know if there is going to be any show. Old story. Company arrived from Russia, bankrupt, early this morning, and not having received their last month's salaries, have refused to appear. I have spent a large amount in advertising and keeping the theatre ready for them, and now I don't know what to do," Crowdy went on. "I must shut up, and have the theatre on my hands at the rental of £120 a week—empty."

"Nonsense!" said Harris. "Have a whisky and soda." Crowdy sat down in a despondent attitude—mentally totting up all his liabilities. Suddenly Harris almost in the same breath burst out, "I tell you what I'll do—60 per cent. to me—I'll take the company over—40 per cent. to you for the house. Is that agreeable?" This meant that Harris would pay all the artistes, so we were not astonished when Crowdy jumped up. "Right!" cried the astonished lessee, and at 7.25 (the curtain was announced to rise at 7.45) the great *impresario* walked on to the stage of the Princess' Theatre, then filled with a howling mob of penniless, defrauded French artistes, and his first words were "*Qu'est qu'il-y-a mes amis?*" I never saw a more bewildered crowd. In a moment or two a timid voice cried, "*Eh, bien, monsieur, c'est bien facile—qui est-ce-que nous payera nos cachets?*" and all stood anxiously awaiting the reply.

"*Moi,*" ejaculated Harris. "Ring up, Collins." And just in the space of forty-five minutes he had taken over another theatre. "Jean Mayeu" was a frost, and for one solid month those artistes appeared at Covent Garden treasury. But incidents of this sort were nothing to this great director, who in one evening would do the English *première* of Verdi's "Falstaff" at Covent Garden a production of

"Siegfried" with Max Alvary, the great Wagnerian tenor at Drury Lane, and "Cavalleria" and "Pagliacci" at Windsor for Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria. His Eastern commercial artfulness and tact never failed him.

The frequency with which the late Queen Victoria "commanded" performances at Windsor rather worried him. What with special trains, scenery, and dislocation of casts, he generally was out several hundred pounds over and above the fee allowed by the Royal authorities. When, however, the Queen wished three Command performances in ten days, it was too much, so he sat down and personally wrote a very nice letter to Sir Henry Ponsonby. This brought a most sympathetic reply from the Royal private secretary, armed with which Harris immediately called on Calvé at the Savoy. He pointed out that her salary was too much to allow him to count the Royal Command as "a performance" in her contract, a matter of about £80 or £100, that Her Majesty had commanded "Cavalleria" as an opera, but no particular artistes, and therefore he "was very sorry," etc., but he must do it as cheaply as he could and put in artistes "*Payés par la quinzaine*" and not "*Par représentation*." Calvé protested. Harris insisted, but in the end relenting, suggested that she might write a letter to Sir Henry, stating that the honour of singing to the Queen of England was so great that she would not think of charging a fee. Calvé took the bait and hastily scribbled the required epistle which was to the effect that the honour of singing "*devant la Reine d'Angleterre*" was so great, etc., that she would offer her services as Santuzza. "What a gracious thing it will be, 'Homage from a French artist,' I'll send this immediately," said our manager, pocketing the coveted document, and off he went. The despair of De Lucia (the Turiddu), of Ancona (the Alfio), of Plançon who was Jupiter in "Philemon," also "Commanded," at being told the same thing was awful, but—and there was a large "but"—added Sir Augustus, "if they cared to do as Calvé had done it would be a pretty com-

pliment," and he very soon found himself the triumphant possessor of four letters, all of which he immediately took down to Buckingham Palace. The exact amount thus saved on each performance was £300.

The Covent Garden *impresario* spent a lot of money in France. French plays, operas, ballets, and artistes benefited to an enormous extent out of his exchequer, so that he thought at one time the "Légion d'Honneur" might justifiably come this way. He was a little piqued that he did not get it, but somewhat solaced when the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (our Duke of Edinburgh) gave him a decoration after the short season of the Saxe-Coburg Company at Drury Lane. But the French ribbon was his pet desire. Now it so happened that at Covent Garden we had a *prima donna* named N—a, who was in favour with the then French President, Casimir Perier. This lady only made a "*Succès d'estime*," at Covent Garden, much to her chagrin. She was ultimately cast for "Signa" in Sir F. H. Cowen's opera, which Harris was under contract to play at least three times. "These English composers," said Harris, "are artful, they compel you beforehand to play their operas three times." After the first performance the lady was taken very ill—doctor's certificates, etc.—"Loss of voice," "Bronchial catarrh"—"Not able to sing for ten days." This was all nonsense, as she really wanted to sing all the Marguerites, Isolde, and other big rôles, which were then distributed to Patti, Melba, Albani, Calvé, Sembrich, and others. So we had to find another lady, Miss Gherlson, to sing at the second "Signa" performance. This incidentally gave us a large amount of trouble, and the lady a "short study," as the second performance came in a few days following the first. Now in the meantime it had been pointed out in high Royal quarters that Italy (Mascagni) and France (Gounod) had both been "Commanded" to Windsor that season, but that England (F. H. Cowen) had not had a look in. So to avoid International difficulties, through the good offices of

dear Sir Paolo Tosti, it happened that the morning after the second performance of "Signa," with the accompanying deluge of medical certificates from the laid-up Belgian *prima donna*, the London papers officially announced that:—

"Her Majesty the Queen, had graciously Commanded a concert performance of Mr. F. H. Cowen's "Signa" at Windsor on the following Monday."

Then the fun began. Madame N—a, the invalided Cantatrice, would be pleased to sing "*devant la Reine*"—in fact her cold "was not so bad"—the doctors had "inaccurately diagnosed the matter"—letters, telegrams—everything to get into the cast she had so petulantly abandoned twenty-four hours before, but all to no avail. "The young artist who came to my rescue at the eleventh hour for the second performance must go to Windsor," generously wrote Sir Augustus. But all artistic resources being exhausted, then came the parting shot! I opened at this time, as I explained, all telegrams up to twelve noon, and this was what I handed to Sir Augustus Harris—the morning of the announcement of this Royal Command:—

"Sir Harris,

"Covent Garden Theatre.

"Faites-moi jouer à Windsor et j'arrangerai quelque chose de bon pour vous avec Casimir Perier.

"N—A"

We had many curious experiences at Covent Garden, most of which have already appeared in print. I am endeavouring only to indite the hitherto unpublished ones. We once changed the opera five times between 10 a.m. and 6.30 o'clock, in order to allow the necessary artistes to go to a Command at Windsor. From "Cavalleria" and "Philemon" at 10 a.m. we got to "Rigoletto" at 12, and then we were considering the possibilities of "Lucia," and I took the train to Maidenhead, where Madame Melba was staying, only to find she was out punting. So punting I followed up all the reaches and

breakwaters, shouting out "Madame Melba—Mel-ba-a-a," but fruitlessly, so back I came to Paddington. By this time it was 4 o'clock, and the only thing left was Puccini's "Manon Lescaut," which we decided to do about 5.45, till little Sepilli rushed in to tell me that the singers of the eight-part women's chorus at the end of the 1st Act were going to Windsor at 6.30; so I 'phoned the late W. M. Hart, the superintendent, an old friend of Harris', to delay the special till I got in a hansom to Paddington, and triumphantly on the platform I captured the eight songstresses, bundled them into an omnibus, and deposited them at Covent Garden at a little after seven.

Of Harris' diplomacy there are many evidences, but he had a negative humour in some of his oratings which sometimes led to a great deal of misunderstanding. It was a custom to have the opera-house done up once a year, and from times immemorial it was done by a Mr. Cole; a letter would be written to "Dear Mr. Cole, will you do the necessary decoration for us this season, terms as before." Accordingly, up bobbed old King Cole and the thing was done. Now it so happened that for many years Mr. Cole had retired from business—a fact which was absolutely unknown to us; the letter was always forwarded on to him, he came up to town, sub-let the contract, and went down to his Devonshire cream for another year with a nice little profit to the good.

We opened the Season in 1894—Monday, May 14th—with Puccini's "Manon," on a Whit-Monday—a Bank Holiday.

May I say here that in reference to this Puccini *première* the composer has been rather ungratefully critical. He complains that the cast of his first opera was not a good one, and Harris' brother-in-law, Frank Rendle, has reminded him of the real issue: "Manon Lescaut" is an unsavoury subject, and was always a failure. Harris wanted to have Verdi's "Falstaff," but Ricordi, the publisher, made it a *sine quâ non* that unless he took both operas he could not have the Verdi work, and to

facilitate this arrangement insisted on the entire company being imported from Milan. To this Puccini made no objection, and even went so far, on the previous night when he and I and Sepilli, the conductor, supped at Gatti's Adelaide Gallery, as to state that he was thoroughly satisfied. Of course, these were in the pre-Boheme-Madame Butterfly-Girl of the Golden West days.

But to continue Mr. Cole's story, the British workman abandoned his half-done work at 1 p.m. on the Saturday previous, and among other things left half-finished was the omnibus-box used by the then Prince of Wales and his party of friends. The Monday being Bank Holiday and our opening night, we were so busy that we knew nothing of this fact until late in the Monday evening, when Sir Augustus was sent for, and I believe the interview which took place between the Royal patron and the Theatre Royal manager was far from pleasant; but there it was—the future King of England asked to sit for three hours in a damp half-papered box, the ceiling white-washed and the wallpaper half-stripped, with the dripping paint on the walls ready for the return of the workmen on Tuesday morning. H.R.H. was righteously annoyed. Harris, however, did not lose his head. He coolly wrote a letter to Maples; they took it in hand the next morning, and had instructions that for one whole week something new in decoration every day was to be done or something fresh added in upholstery or furniture, so that by the end of the week the box was almost crowded out. This was the other extreme, and the late King was not slow to advise the Management of the fact.

But Harris made many a lapsus which no one better enjoyed than himself. One on the then much-discussed "pitch question" is characteristic.

It is not many years ago since Covent Garden was the only orchestra possessing low-pitch instruments. Harris one morning asked me at The Elms, his residence in St. John's Wood, how the flute or clarinet managed to flatten as required, and I told him that they simply had to "pull out" or "push

in " a little valvular arrangement to obtain the required nicety. We drove on to Covent Garden—it was the first rehearsal of the season. " Good morning, gentlemen," volunteered Sir Augustus to the band, " I've had a long letter from Mr. Jean de Reszkè this morning, and he complains bitterly about the high pitch." " Well," said old Carrodus, the leader, " how are we to help it ? " " Well, you must pull out, dear boy," replied Harris triumphantly.

At Windsor, all sorts of humorous things would occur. At one time when Harris would shout out, " Is Arthur Collins there ? " another Arthur Collins would be fetched—Colonel Sir Arthur Collins, one of the King's Equerries; again, fearful that any one should invade the privacy of the Waterloo Chambers while he was arranging the stage, Drury Lane's present successful manager gave strict orders that " No one was to be allowed in the Hall." Seeing a form slowly moving at the back and inspecting everything carefully, he rushed down to ascertain who had disobeyed his orders, only to find that it was the late Queen Victoria herself, who came in " Just to have a look round."

Mascagni at this time was flushed with the success of " Cavalleria," and annoyed at the failure of " L'Amico Fritz " and one or two other later works to attain the same merit of success. Mascagni's anger was further accentuated by the prevalent remark that it was " a fervent hope he would soon write another ' Cavalleria.' " I quote this sentence as the *ipsissima verba* of general criticism and newspaper comment. He heard the cry everywhere—in the theatre, club, Press, society : " A long way off ' Cavalleria,' " " Nothing like ' Cavalleria,' " " Never so popular," etc., etc. Mascagni got very much hurt at this, so much so, that at a reception given him at Harris' house (" The Elms "), when the *impresario* asked him to conduct a selection of the popular work, which was just about to be played by the Coldstreams, he point-blank refused, but ultimately succumbed to the gentle persuasion of Lady Harris.

Again at the Palace Theatre, when it first started as a music-hall, at a *matinée* given for the French Journalists' Benevolent Fund, Harris made Mascagni conduct against his will the "Cavalleria—Ave Maria"; a music publisher's arrangement of his *Intermezzo* which he detested, sung on this particular occasion by Calvé. Calvé and he were at daggers drawn, so Harris doubly enjoyed this *tour de force*. Mascagni, who then hated Calvé, compelled to conduct an "Ave Maria" version of his own *Intermezzo*, which version he did not write! It was great. The more Mascagni refused—the more Harris insisted. "This performance," said Harris, "is for the poor widows and starving children of Continental journalists. If you refuse, Mascagni, your name will be anathema all over the Continent." And the Italian composer gave in. As a sop to Cerberus, Sir Augustus took the composer down to Windsor a few nights later to conduct his opera there, but even then he was not safe from the old "Cavalleria" taunts. The Queen, as was her custom, sent to know who would Sir Augustus like to "present." "Why, Mascagni, the composer, of course." "Druriolanus" had gained his point at the Music-hall Palace. He would return the compliment at the Windsor Palace. To the Royal presence he was ushered—the usual Royal formalities—congratulations, etc., and then one parting Royal word; the Queen addressing the composer: "Signor Mascagni, I hope you will soon write another 'Cavalleria'" (Tableau).

Tamagno, when he went to Windsor, sang "Manrico," and everybody knows the big *ut de poitrine* in the last act. The Waterloo Chamber is not a large building, and when Tamagno let out his top C it shook the chandelier. Asked by Sir Augustus if she liked the new tenor the Queen replied: "Yes, but must he always sing as loud as he did to-night?" He was very careful of his voice this great artiste—originally an Italian blacksmith; on the days of the nights that he sang he never talked from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. All his business correspon-

dence on these occasions was done on a slate which he hung round his neck.

These Windsor presentations, as I have hinted, had many a humorous side. Once Plançon, as Mephistopheles, waited to change into his evening suit—we told him the Queen would not be kept waiting, and in the end persuaded him to go into the Royal presence with half his make-up on.

Calvé and Sigrid Arnoldson—the latter a Dane—appeared on the same night at a "Command." Harris decided to "present" Calvé, and did really leave Arnoldson out. Now these "Command" performances are generally followed by presentations of jewellery to all the artistes about two weeks after the performance. Arnoldson's husband, a Mr. Fischhoff ("Fish-hooks" we called him) was very wrath at Harris' neglect; so on the morning after the performance, he wrote direct to the then Princess of Wales (Queen Alexandra) on the supposed "slight" her countrywoman had received at Windsor. The "ruse" succeeded, for the morrow's evening paper contained this paragraph:—

"Madam Sigrid Arnoldson was commanded to Buckingham Palace to-day by Her Majesty, the Queen, who presented the Danish Nightingale with a beautiful diamond brooch in remembrance of her excellent performance of 'Baucis' on Saturday Night."

"Umph!" said Augustus Harris, "that taps for her 'coda,' at Covent Garden," and he kept his word. It may be here explained to the uninitiated that "coda" is the musician's term for "the end."

I once called on Harris on the morning after the production of "Waterloo" at Bristol, by Sir H. Irving. "What is this new play of Irving's?" quoth Harris. "Oh!" I said, "a one-act piece by a young man of a new school—Conan Doyle." "Who's he?" "Doyle," I said, "you know—wrote those 'Sherlock Holmes' stories." "Holmes—Holmes—Holmes," cried Harris thoughtfully.

"Oh, yes, I know—didn't he write 'The Autobiography of a Breakfast Table?'" (Fact.)

On the first night of the "Derby Winner" at Drury Lane, the wrong animal won. For reality's sake, we put the real actor jockey, Harry Eversfield, to ride the hero's horse, win the money, and secure the natural love ending of the play. But the "super" jockey, who had always done this sort of work, and had made a stage hit on "Voluptuary" in "The Prodigal Daughter," was jealous at being only allowed to hold nightly the winner's head till the appointed word "Go." When this signal arrived he did "hold" the arranged-for winner's head, with the result that the villain's horse came in first. This ruined the plot; and the play ended to the derisive cheers of the big first-night audience, but the Invernessed shirt-fronted knight was before the curtain in a minute. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I know what you're laughing at" (huge merriment), "but as a matter of fact the winning-post is half a mile off, further down the course, and although the villain's horse was in front just passing here, I give you my word that Clipstone, at the winning-post, won by a neck!" And thus was a huge *contretemps* turned into a huge success.

Augustus Harris had in early life decided that he would soon have a shot at theatrical management, and as was ultimately the case forsake the business office of Erlangers' in Paris, where he was apprenticed, for the more exciting life of the theatre. After he left Erlangers' he was retained by Charles Wyndham for stage-management purposes, and it was during a visit to Paris that at Wyndham's request he sampled "Les Dominos Roses," and wired the then Mr Wyndham to purchase the English rights, he (Augustus Harris) playing—his first appearance in London—the part of Harry Greenlanes in the English version "Pink Dominos."

Three years before he reached Drury Lane he made an attempt to go into management on his own at the Philharmonic, in Islington, for I find the following letter written to his friend, Jimmy

Taylor, a financial adviser of his father's, who recently retired from an honoured position in the Railway Clearing house.

The letter is dated from—

“80, Guildford Street,
“Russell Square,
“30th July, 1876.

“MY DEAR TAYLOR,

“The Philharmonic is to be had very cheap, what do you think of taking it and running it as a first-class music-hall such as does not exist in London, *i.e.* to play two or three little ballets every evening? In fact, the same style of performance as the Alhambra used to give when a music-hall.”

(Here follows the business man's keen insight as to ways and means.)

Rent, Taxes, etc., paid off by letting refreshments, bars, etc.

	£
Gas and Limelight	20
Orchestra	20
Ballet and Company	100
Advertising	30
Front of House	15
Working of Stage	} 20
Carpenters, props, and	
Dressers	
Weekly loss on production sold again to provincial theatre	10
	<hr/> £215

“£36 per night expenses at the most. What do you think of it?

“Yours truly,

“AUGUSTUS HARRIS”

Harris was a good business man but always very touchy about his financial position, which, after his

Shrivalty, was the cause of much unnecessary and unkindly remark. During this period we both went one night into Gatti's. "Ah, Gatti," said Gus Harris to Agostino, who was sitting at the usual family table, "I saw you on a 'bus to-day in Long Acre. What's the meaning of that?" "Nothing," was Agostino's reply. "Isn't it good to know that one can afford to be seen riding on a 'bus?" At this time certain busybodies were trying to circulate rumours about Harris' financial position

CHAPTER VIII

More about Augustus Harris and Arthur Collins—The Passing of Augustus Harris—John Coleman's "interregnum" with "The Duchess of Coolgardie"—Collins has an "option" to buy Drury Lane—Harris' humour—German Opera and G. B. Shaw band—Sore-throated singers and sore-headed authors—Harris and his first backer—His experience with a "serio lady" in Glasgow—He writes a cheque on the back of a French menu for half a French play—His fortune.

ON Monday night, June 22nd, 1896, Augustus Harris passed away at the Royal Pavilion, Folkestone. There then departed from this life one of the most peculiar, popular, and genial personalities that the British theatrical firmament has ever known. His life has never been written, and I am not making any attempt to Boswell the "Druriolanus" of the 'Eighties and 'Nineties. It was through the Vokes family going on strike on February 3rd in 1879 that Harris came into Drury Lane. The exact notice which then closed the theatre was as follows :—

"Owing to a combination of unforeseen circumstances, this theatre is unavoidably closed for the present.

"F. B. CHATTERTON

"(Sole Lessee and Manager)"

And it was through the uncertainty of the Gye-Mapleson-Lago campaigns that he acquired Covent Garden in 1888. Again, in a letter to James

Taylor, the friend of his father's, whom he seems to have consulted on all his important ventures, he says—

“DEAR TAYLOR,

“I have taken Covent Garden. The only person I have to fear is Sir Michael Costa.”

Sir Michael Costa was very bitter in his likes and dislikes. He objected once to Mapleson offering Offenbach a position as conductor, and his hatred for the elder Augustus Harris led him to make the following reference to the younger one, who was standing on the stage one day.

“Who is that young man?” he said to Mapleson, for whom the future “Druriolanus” was acting as stage manager. “He seems to know his business, but I think I heard you call him Harris. Can he be the son of my old enemy?”

Mapleson tried to explain away the fact, but Costa would not have it, remarking that “the father has shown himself my enemy, and I am the enemy of the son.” Nice sympathetic man, Costa.

Early in Harris' career he encountered a young actor named Arthur Collins, who had previously been apprenticed to Henry Emden, the scenic artist. Collins had already served an apprenticeship in Carter's Seed Stores in Holborn, but when he joined the Harris *régime*, he was first sent on tour to play eight parts a night in “Human Nature,” and later as stage manager of a pantomime that Harris was running at the Grand Theatre, Glasgow. From there to Drury Lane was a quick transit, and for many years before Harris' death experience had shown that the real man behind the wheel was undoubtedly the present managing director of the famous house. When Harris was taken seriously ill at Folkestone, the possibility of losing his old chief so prostrated Collins that on the day of the *impresario's* death he went home ill, tired and broken-hearted, and was not at the theatre at night when the sad news arrived. Personally, I was anxiously awaiting the dreaded news at Gatti's,

with the two brothers, Agostino and Stephano, Boyle Lawrence and Fred G. Latham, when the "Daily Mail," to which Lawrence was attached, 'phoned it through about 11 o'clock; but the first intimation that came to the stage manager was a telegram to his flat at 3 a.m.

"*Meet body at Charing Cross at eight.*"

This prostrated Collins for some weeks, but time was getting on, and the executors in due course gave him an option to purchase the theatre—with no time limit (this was rather important)—and the proviso that an *interim* drama season "The Duchess of Coolgardie" by John Coleman, and a pantomime on Harrisian lines, taking over the existing Harrisian engagements, should be done by the Executors.

On the first night of the Coleman drama, poor old John might have been heard in front of the curtain, thanking "kind friends in front for the dear, delightful reception of my play," and hoping that he "may be permitted to tread in the footsteps of his late dear friend, Augustus Harris, for many years to come in the G-r-a-n-d old National Theatre," etc.

Now, at this time, young Mr. Collins was walking up and down the scene dock with an option to buy Drury Lane in his pocket.

Harris had a great humour, and allowed all about him even to tell stories at his expense, generally joining in them with a good relish. At the time that he acquired (after the original production by The Carl Rosa Company) "Hansel and Gretel," he was rather amused at the tiresome iteration of the Woodman's song with its senseless "Tra-la-la," and one evening he remarked, "Glover, why can't I go and live in a wood—free from all my worries, and loll about all day singing 'Tra-la-la'?" So Arthur Sturges and I immediately sat down and mapped out a burlesque on "Hansel and Gretel," making the principal part a retired Inverness-caped *impresario* who had sold out all his effects and only wanted to bask in the beautiful sunshine. Harris was delighted and loved to sing:—

THE SONG OF THE THEATRICAL MANAGER.

(Resting.)

"I'm tired of the garden, I'm sick of the Lane,
 Of operas and dramas and such;
 Too much pantomime isn't good for the brain—
 And I've had a great deal too much.
 With *ballet* rehearsals my life is a curse,
 No minute can I call my own;
 And so I've decided before I get worse,
 To dally with Nature alone.

Tra-la-la (*ad lib*)

"I've twenty new plays to produce in a week,
 The 'panto' rehearsals are nigh;
 I've critics to conquer and speeches to speak
 And Heaven-born actors to try,
 But let them all wait, I'm tired of such things—
 A manager's heart isn't stone,
 And great is the joy and relief that it brings
 To frolic with Nature alone.

Tra-la-la (*ad lib*)"

Then I woke up one morning, alas! to find, to the intense grief of the entire world, that the theatrical manager was "resting" for evermore, and the painful applicability of the foregoing verses accentuated the fact that the two people concerned in its authorship were, with almost fatal superstition, humorously making reference to the cessation of work which, if acted upon, might have prolonged the life of one of the greatest theatrical *impresarii* of the Victorian era—Augustus Glossop Harris, Kt.

As I have remarked, the most marvellous thing about his work was the fact that the distribution of all his vast wealth was at every point and corner punctuated with a vein of humour and a light-hearted touch which made the greater the work the greater the pleasure for everybody concerned. May I recall one or two humorous incidents of that great era of management?

Shortly after the production of "A Life of Pleasure," being in want of a leading man for the provincial tour, an agent sent to Drury Lane a

popular provincial favourite, with this admonition: "Don't be afraid to ask a lot of money. Harris will like you all the better for it." Arrived at Drury Lane, the provincial Thespian put on his best airs and graces, and in answer to a query as to terms said, "Well, Sir Augustus, I think I'm worth £30 a week." "What? Thirty pounds a week for a provincial tour? You must be mad, dear boy! Mad!! What do you take me for?" A long pause, and then suddenly came the reply. "But then," said the actor, remembering his agent's admonition, "you see what I'll draw, Sir Augustus." "Draw," thundered the *impresario*, "Draw! Do you know that I can hire a Maxim gun for fifty shillings a week that will draw the whole of London?"

On the following Saturday in the same season we did the "Valkyrie" at Drury Lane in German, with Max Alvary and Frau Klafsky,—Herr Lohse conducting for the first time in England. Harris prided himself on the band—always a big Wagnerian *desideratum*, and as the blind Earl Dysart, Chairman of the Wagnerian Society, had interviewed us on the subject he was over anxious on this score—and noticing G. Bernard Shaw (then musical critic for "The World") talking to me, called me aside and asked me to introduce him. I didn't quite know Shaw's point of view, and as he had been railing at me for reinstating him on the first-night sheet, asserting that I had spoiled his holidays, and that he only came because the dying Edmund Yates in handing him the tickets did so with a kind of "Be-kind-to-Harris-my-last-dying-wish" look—paused. Harris noticed Shaw's hesitation, and placing himself between us took the initiative: "How do you do, Mr. Shaw? Glover tells me you are old friends. What do you think of the opera to-night?" "Oh, very good," replied England's future dramatist, "very good"—and then a lull. A long deadly pause. Harris looked at Shaw. Shaw looked at me—a silence to be broken by the not-to-be-denied manager. "And," continued Harris, "what do you think of

the band—yes, the band? Isn't it splendid?" I saw it coming. Another long pause. Another look at me, and Shaw thus pushed in a corner said, "Yes, they're not bad—not bad—but I think they've wonderfully deteriorated since I heard them last on the Sunday boat going to Hampton Court."

There are two reasons why Harris purchased the "Sunday Times" of which he was one time the Proprietor with James Willing. One was that it had been suggested that he did not collaborate substantially in those dramas in which his name appeared as Collaborator, and having issued a writ against one paper—the "World," I think—which, on this question, went so far as to state that he could not write anything, he immediately became the Proprietor of the "Sunday Times," and proceeded to write a column of notes every week on anything and everything, headed "Here, There, and Everywhere," and signed it "The Knight Errant." "When the trial comes on," he remarked to me, "I will produce the original MSS. of these articles for twelve months, and then what price my writing anything?" He afterwards sold the "Sunday Times" to Mr. Lewis Edmunds, K.C., for a Mrs. Beer. The second reason why he wanted the "Sunday Times" was that he took umbrage at a notice in the "Referee" about one of the Drury Lane productions, and Henry Sampson—then doing the Handbook on the front page, let the Knight of Drury Lane have one of the severest dressings down that journalist has ever administered to player. A rather humorous *contretemps* occurred subsequently with the "Era" when Harris thought that he had a splendid opportunity of getting his own back on the "Referee." As a result of the "Referee" criticism the Drury Lane advertisements were withdrawn from that paper, and at this time Mr. Edward Ledger, the proprietor of the "Era," had inserted a critical paragraph about Sir Charles Wyndham, the good taste of which was resented by all the London managers, headed by Sir Henry Irving. It was then decided as a protest

to make a wholesale withdrawal of all the London theatre advertisements from the "Era," and on Harris being asked to co-operate and remove his various enterprises from the "Era's" advertising column he made it a *sine quâ non* of his doing so that the London managers should likewise support him in his action towards the "Referee." This of course they all refused to do and so it came about that six of London's leading managers one Sunday morning announced in the "Observer" that they had that day withdrawn their support from the "Era." This was one of the many little battles of peevishness which in those days more or less amused the theatrical world at large, but now we have grown more open-minded, and "brotherly-love," if it does not universally exist, at least is not battledore-and-shuttlecocked about so much in public.

But it is strange to reflect how all these managerial whims run in grooves. It was thought that Augustus Harris was the first manager to own a Sunday paper, but he was only emulating his Drury Lane predecessor, E. T. Smith, who in the 'Sixties was the proprietor of the very same "Sunday Times." But Smith even went farther in his managerial eccentricities, for he stood for Parliament and went down into Bedfordshire and opposed the Duke of Bedford, his own landlord's nominee, in a general election. He polled 101 and lost £2000.

In a wonderfully sympathetic and graphic manner, my friend Mr. Clement Scott used to describe the starting of Drury Lane and the discovery in Hyde Park of one of the gentlemen who originally helped Harris in his finance. This friend invited young Harris home to dinner, and it was a peculiar irony of Fate that that dinner, whereat he was lent £250 to start serious theatrical life, took place in the very house where all the successful Harris Drury Lane pantomimes and dramas were concocted, and was at the time of his death his residence.

The gentleman in question (it is no secret) was

Mr. Frank Neck, who subsequently sold him his St. John's Wood house, "The Elms." When Harris went into Opera at Convent Garden, he bought his partner out, as he said, "Neck and crop" for £12,000.

There was nothing he enjoyed so much in life as a joke against himself. One evening, entering a place of entertainment in Glasgow, called "The Garden of Eden," in company with Arthur Collins and a well-known actor, Mr. Victor Stevens, a lady performer thought that the three had laughed immoderately at her singing. As a matter of fact, the Drury Lane trio were not laughing at the lady, but at the situation—for to keep off the nightly intrusion of a rowdy gang of Glasgow students the manager had erected iron bars in front of the footlights—and the ludicrous situation akin to the performing bear at the Zoological Gardens tickled the risible faculties of the manager and his friends. The lady, however, took the ridicule as personal, and later on in the evening when she came among the audience to dispense chocolates and cigarettes—a portion of her nightly duties—she "went for" the scoffers as follows :

"Just like three pro's, who come in on the nod, to come here and 'guy' me! I know you, Mr. Victor Stevens" (this to the well-known actor); "And nobody could mistake you!" (this to Collins); "And I'm certain you're an actor too!" (this to Augustus Harris). This was too much for Gus, he ceased his volcanic hilarity, immediately jumped up, clasped the bewildered artiste by both hands, saying: "Thank you, madam, for those few kind words! I have been called a great many things in my life, but this is the first time I have been called an actor."

In Paris, Fred Horner took us, Harris, Collins and Self, one night to see "Champignol Malgré Lui," with a view to Sir Augustus buying a half-interest therein, which he did as he liked the piece so much; and we had supper afterwards. In the middle of the supper, Horner anxiously ejaculated: "What about the money and the contract,

Sir Augustus?" "Money, Contract!! Bring me a pen and ink" (this to the waiter), and taking up the *menu* in the *Cafè de Paris*, he wrote across it:

"I hereby purchase half all rights in 'Championol Malgré Lui' for £300."

He then tossed it back peevishly to Horner and said, "Take that to Drury Lane on Tuesday morning and they'll give you a cheque. De Reszkè, Melba, and hundreds of others never had a contract with me. The word of 'Sir Harris' was always good enough for them." He was hurt at this, and three days afterwards sold out his interest in the play.

This was quite true. There was no man whose word was more universally taken. The day following his death Neil Forsyth and I walked down to Coutts' Bank to adjust matters, as we found that at least £3000 of cheques had not been passed through which had been in the hands of Calvé, De Reszkè, Melba, and other artistes for quite a number of days.

As I have just mentioned Fred Horner the following episode in connection with his short Parliamentary career may not be out of place.

In our theatrical way, we often had to help one another apart from financial assistance. During the 1900 Khaki election, Fred Horner, then a London Parliamentary candidate, appealed to Arthur Collins to lend him some Khaki uniforms for supers to handbill and canvass the district on the Surrey side. This might be a "corrupt practice," but Collins good-naturedly sent the future M.P. to Morris Angel's in Shaftesbury Avenue, and in due course on the morning of the election fifty supers were patrolled in uniform on the Thames Embankment opposite to Scotland Yard to receive instructions for the election campaign, which embraced an area in the Southwark district over Westminster Bridge. Now Colonel Brookfield (Charlie Brookfield's brother) had just then got an Act passed making it an offence for any one to ridicule or use the Queen's uniform other than a

man in the service; so when the candidate arrived at Westminster Bridge he found the fifty supers more or less under arrest for degrading the service cloth. Explanations followed, they being liberated on all their names and addresses being taken, so off they went electioneering. The war being just then over, as each one of them entered various hostelries in the Southwark area they were received as "back from the war," fêted, wine, beered, and incapacitated for their work. The uniforms never turned up again, and it is said that four of the group are missing to this very day.

When Augustus Harris decided that the big scene in a pantomime should be "The History of England in Twenty Minutes," he would not take Collins' word that it was impossible, and Collins was right, for on the first night it lasted one hour and forty minutes. It was the most tiresome yet humorous thing to rehearse that I ever experienced. "Where's Joan of Arc?" shouted Harris. "Gone to the Albion," a neighbouring hostelry, "with William the Conqueror," replied the call-boy. "Oh, Henry the Eighth, for goodness' sake do look as if you really had eight wives!" "I cawnt, guv'nor," replied Henry the Eighth, "I've got one at home and she's a packet—I can tell you!" Then the first night came and everything went well till we got to Charles the First. "Charles the First—where is he?" Nowhere to be found, and so we had to pass on—without Charles the First. "Mr. Dick could not keep Charles the First's head out of his memorial," wrote Mr. "Spectator" Walkley in "The Star," "but Sir Augustus kept his head, body and shoulders out of the History of England." When Arthur Collins rushed out and burst into the dressing-room to find the missing monarch and give him "instant execution," Charles the First was with Cardinal Wolsey, with his legs crossed sitting on a table playing cards and smoking a cigarette, for he "didn't know it was so near."

Shortly before his death, we had a supper party at Gatti's—to an old bachelor friend on his

marriage. Across the menu card, in response to a request for his autograph, Harris wrote :

“To all of this a long farewell—
And so say all of us.”

He little knew how soon the sands of Father Time would run out in his own case.

Harris really died a very rich man. His estate realized about £100,000, for it included Drury Lane—four years' lease to run; Theatrical scenery; Opera scenery bought by Covent Garden Syndicate; “The Little Genius” production; various sundries; and, of course, his copyrights were all good negotiable effects.

To mention Drury Lane and Augustus Harris without a reference to the famous Vokes family would be an unpardonable oversight, for it was during Chatterton's last pantomime at Drury Lane when the “ghost did not walk,” and the celebrated Vokes Family struck, that the Theatre closed, and ultimately fell into Harris' hands. The brothers A. and S. Gatti were at this time running a pantomime at Covent Garden, and being financially sound they were better able to weather the terrible snow-storm of 1879 which led to the great Chatterton “frost.” Harris did not bear any ill will towards the “family” and immediately retained them for his first season.

The Vokes Family were one of the cleverest and most talented troupes of the mid-Victorian Era. They came out of the old Surrey School, and consisted of Victoria, Rosina, Jessie, and Fred. Victoria and Jessie never married, but Rosina became the first wife of that dear old Bohemian and English gentleman Cecil Clay, brother of Frederick Clay, composer of “She wandered down the Mountain Side” and “I'll sing thee songs of Araby,” who, it may be remembered, died suddenly after the production of his opera “The Golden Ring” at the Alhambra.

Poor Fred Vokes was a wonderful dancer, and also a very fine black-and-white artist, and I have several specimens of his pen-and-ink work—one of

which is of exceptional interest. As we were both watching the Jubilee procession of Queen Victoria in 1887 at Liverpool, a catastrophe happened to a triumphal arch shortly after Her Majesty had passed through. Fred immediately sketched the situation in my presence—a remarkable piece of fine work!

The family had a repertoire of very humorous one-act plays, and in the interim seasons—between pantomime times—toured the provinces. As their musical major-domo I spent many years with them, and scoured the country from John O’Groat’s to Land’s End.

I remember once poor Fred, who was mad on yachting, elected to sail from Plymouth to Torquay rather than accompany us by the usual train route. Arrived at Torquay, we found the door of the Theatre besieged with a huge crowd awaiting admission, but Fred was nowhere to be seen, and without him we could do nothing. So we had to return the money—a matter of about eighty pounds—much to the public disappointment. A hue and cry was started for the missing dancer, but nothing heard till dusk set in, when distress rockets illuminated the skies over Torquay Bay. Out went the lifeboat, to return about 3 a.m. with poor Fred tired to the world from excessive rowing and starving with hunger—the yacht had got becalmed in the Channel.

On another occasion they lashed him to the mast of a fishing smack, and he had to be ransomed by his own manager for £5—the purchase-money of a boat of some hundreds of mackerel he had ordered to be sent home to his dear mother, “because she liked to get it fresh.” To wander on the harbours of fishing villages and buy huge consignments of this sort of goods was a perfect madness with him.

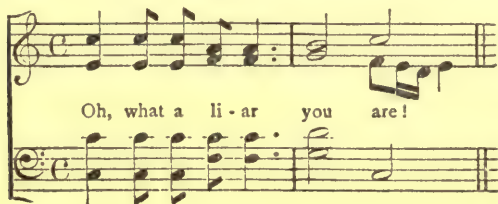
We generally spent the entire day boating, rowing, driving, or enjoying ourselves in some fashion; anything like serious thought never entered our minds. Of three musical directors, two at least were famous—poor Hamilton Clarke, who was with Irving for many years at the Lyceum—and Sidney Jones, composer of “The Geisha,” “San Toy,”

etc. Clarke was a military band-master once, and in nearly every case did the "overtures" for the Sullivan-Gilbert operas. Sir Arthur has more than once acknowledged this. One of the pet jokes of this company was harmonized versions of the sayings, "Oh, what a liar you are!" and "Well—I'm d——d." The first of these was done in four-part harmony. We usually paraded the towns in quartettes. We seldom divided. On entering any hostelry, hotel, or other public place, we generally found some great Isaak Waltonian expert—a "when-I-was-out-in-the-Indian-Jungle" Bombastes or some actor who "drew a hundred pounds a night in Hamlet." So we set out to amuse ourselves at the expense of these little life's vanities so prevalent at health-resort bars. The procedure was simple :—

Scene : The Royal Hotel, Southport. Smoking room full of visitors. New week-end arrival tilting a tooth-pick with the bar Hebe, and sipping a gin-and-bitters, "Don't-you-know."

N.W.E.A. Yes, deah! I remember quite plainly we went fishing on the Tay—and do you know that one day I caught ten salmon weighing forty pounds each.

(Now by this time we—*i.e.* the Vokes quartette, may have entered the bar and caught the last line, of might have been sitting waiting for our prey; so on the words "Weighing forty pounds each" one of us—Hamilton Clarke, Sidney Jones or the present writer—would hum a sort of la-la-la-la in the octave to give the pitch, and the glee party thus led off chimed in :—



Of course, this usually brought some sort of remonstrance—"What the devil—do you mean, how dare you!" but it all ended in hospitality and—business.) We varied this refrain with a shorter one in unison, to be used when we had to go out in duets or trios. It was:



Well, I'm d—Shish!

While on one of the Vokes' tours living with a good old friend Sidney Harcourt, at the end of a week in Edinburgh the landlady charged us a shilling for the "cruet," *i.e.* mustard and salt, etc. We at first refused to pay, and she locked us in our room till we ultimately did so, too late, however, to catch our train, so we had (in order to be in time for our engagements at the next town) to charter a special, at a cost of nine pounds. That was the dearest pepper and salt I ever enjoyed.

Then again one night in Dublin on a Lord Lieutenant's "Command" night, an ex-Lord Mayor, one of the Iveagh family, Sir Benjamin Guinness, the proprietor of Guinness' XX Stout, entered the Royal Box. "Three cheers for the ex-Lord Mayor!" shouted a gallery jackeen. "No, Larry," replied a kindred spirit, "three cheers for the XX Lord Mayor."

Once when I was on tour we opened at East Grinstead with Charles Collette to discover that we had no band, its place being taken by a grand piano on which I had to officiate. During a dance the legs of the piano gave way, and pinned me to the floor, and had it not been for the turned-in legs which kept the heavy instrument a few inches from the ground, both my pedal supports would have been irretrievably crushed.

CHAPTER IX

How Arthur Collins floated Drury Lane—His many disappointments—Invalid, peevish, and recalcitrant stars—Leno and his humours—"Born" and "made"—Leno and Campbell fall out of a balloon—"G.G.'s" telegram—The early discovery of Leno and its later bearings—The old pantomime and the new—The old whistling top gallery—Spectacle, humour, and music-hall turns—Civic honours.

THE one believer in the future Drury Lane was its present managing director. He received from Augustus Harris' executors an option which passed through many vicissitudes. It was yearned after by dozens of people, City syndicates, actor-managers, Stock Exchange speculators, *et hoc genus omne*. The eleventh hour arrived in due course (time was, naturally, the essence of the option), and although there was no date for completion, he foresaw a crisis imminent, and it duly arrived in the form of a request from the deceased manager's executors that the sum of one thousand pounds would be required in forty-eight hours on account of the purchase, to keep the option alive (this option carried the remainder of Harris' lease and the entire theatre equipment, lock, stock and barrel). One thousand pounds!!! None of us had it, or knew for the moment where to find it. At last, on the eve of the expiry of the option, we were all fearfully anxious to keep the historic house in its present hands, it came about that Arthur Collins found a good fairy with the requisite four figures, and into the executors' offices in

Victoria Street entered "Druriolanus II." and his solicitor.

"One thousand pounds!" requested the legal representative of the executors, Lady Harris, and Mr. Frank B. Rendle, her brother.

"My cheque for the amount," replied Arthur Collins as he sat down and wrote out the famous document. This was not quite what was anticipated, as it was thought that the first "refusal" would fall through, and that the second option—in the hands of Mr. Oscar Barrett, who had been associated with the Interregnum pantomime—would be exercised. But it was so, and thus for a second time in its career the passing over of Drury Lane from one management to another was sensationally carried out—remembering in 1879 Chatterton's failure, the Vokes Family strike, leading to Harris' triumphal entry and subsequent successful *régime*.

Arthur Collins stuck to his guns. All sorts of proposals and suggestions were made to him by people who knew nothing about "how to run the Lane," but he has adhered to his policy—good drama and pantomime—and the result has been amply justified for fifteen years, a record of which successes appears at the end of this volume. The first play was "The White Heather." We opened on a Thursday night. On the Saturday following, when all England was hailing the success of the new *régime*, something went wrong with the hydraulic lift used in the lock scene. The large cylinders burst, leaving an enormous cavity of hundreds of feet deep fast filling with tons of water. A huge house of about five hundred pounds cash value was waiting impatiently for the rising of the curtain and commencement of the play, which ultimately had to be abandoned, the audience sent away, and the money returned. But we were faced with a novel situation. Nearly all the money, owing to the great success of the play, was "booked money," *i.e.* monies taken beforehand at the booking-office—pit and gallery excepted—and I had to go on, at the request of Arthur Collins, to

explain that all the receipts would be returned or sets exchanged for another evening. But we were in his horrible dilemma: we had hardly any ready cash to return! It was all banked early in the day. So out into the by-ways and surrounding streets Collins despatched the various heads of the staff—all well known and trusted in the district—to the Hummums and Tavistock Hotels, Globe, Gatti's, Romano's, or any hostelry where we were identified, some of us hatless and top-coatless in pelting rain proffering our own hastily-written I.O.U.'s for gold, silver, and even copper—anything, so long as it represented bullion—which we carted back (nearly all in pewter measures) to return to an anxious, naturally excited mob, one-half of whom suspected trouble, and the other half suspected a huge advertising "coup." A new management!!—a hitch on the third night!! something wrong?—any hazardous surmise was attempted. But nothing was wrong, and thus ended the only breakdown that has ever taken place at Drury Lane about which the audience knew anything, or which prevented the already advertised performance.

One of the most impressive incidents during this scene of managerial anxiety was dear old Mrs. John Wood kissing Arthur Collins and telling him all would be right on Monday, what time I was in front explaining the "accident." We always suspected treachery here, because a few nights later the goldfish used in the tank for the great diving scene were poisoned, and had we not found it out in time, the best situation in the play would have gone wrong, and a second *contretemps* in one week would not have done us any good.

The present management has really had some first-night trials with artistes which would have soured a different temperament, but they have been stolidly faced and conquered, all with a charitable good humour and optimism. We rang up one Boxing Night without "a Principal Boy." But the lady in question, that clever conscientious artiste, Miss Nellie Stewart, insisted on coming down to show herself to the management and

personally explain her hoarseness and offer to "pull through," but her own representative, Mr. George Musgrove, stood in her dressing-room, insisted that she was ill, and refused to allow her to go on. And she did not, her part being taken by Miss Lollie Lowell at a moment's notice, who was handed, as she came off the stage, fifty pounds that same evening by the grateful manager for her opportune services.

Nellie Stewart had made a success in a previous pantomime as Ganem, in "The Forty Thieves." From New York on Boxing Night her husband sent her a telegram:—

"As you come on for heaven's sale smile and look pleasant."

Another Boxing Night *contratempo* was when Miss Amelia Stone (principal girl) fainted at the end of the first part, and could not continue the performance. The next day Mr. Collins' lady typist gallantly went on and read the part. Yet a third was when Mr. Harry Randal caught cold on Christmas Eve and had to stop off; and a fourth was when another artist—annoyed at being required to speak his lines correctly after four weeks' rehearsal—"walked out of the theatre" the day before the dress rehearsal, *i.e.* on Christmas Eve. His offer to return on Boxing Night was not accepted, and as there was a negative clause in his contract, he had to cool his London heels for twelve weeks at a loss of an average hundred pounds a week—twelve hundred pounds. That is what I call Napoleonic management.

I often wonder why it is that actors who take large salaries in musical productions do not know the double duty they owe to both manager and public. It is an insult to the public and a breach of faith to the other—the manager—not to do your business properly, and at least learn the lines set out for the general excellence of the performance. The author is always entitled to a run for his money with his lines. To cut them out or substitute

ungrammatical drivel is dishonest, disgusting, and disheartening. "Gag," the interpolated impromptu, in reason is, of course, useful, but the greatest of all musical plays, the greatest succession of all successes, and the greatest classics of the light music drama have all been achieved by adhering strictly to the author's lines—I mean the "Savoy" library, and yet because the distinguished *litterateur* insisted on this natural prerogative, he was always slanderously represented as a very disagreeable person. Never was such calumny ever invented.

Dan Leno started with the Collins' *régime* at about £80 a week. He finished at £240 for twelve performances, *i.e.* £20 a night. Although this looks princely, it is really a small fee. It is the general impression that Leno "improvised" everything at Drury Lane. Never was there a greater error. Leno was a "builder," but without an "architect" he could do nothing. Nearly everything in which he succeeded at the Lane he was "written for." Every song he worked was supplied him by his own pet poet, Herbert Darnley. I don't say this in detriment to Harris, but Leno's successes with Harris were as nothing compared to his triumphs with Collins. Harris let him come on and simply "be Dan Leno." Collins thought out the Leno style, and gave him the Leno material for the Leno triumph. Every funny situation or scene was built for him, first by the producer, and then written round by the librettist. He had the least initiative sense of humour of any one I ever met; once provided with the material he had the best contributory and constructive power. He wanted "cut out" as being useless nearly every scene which has made his great fame and the pantomime share of our big dividends. A few cases in point. One has only to remember the horse-poisoning scene in "The Babes in the Wood," or the airship scene in "Mother Goose," or the company promoting scene in "The Forty Thieves." Each of these effects, which shook London with legitimate laughter for weeks and weeks, Leno condemned as "unfunny" at rehearsal; but Collins was adamant, and when these inter-

polations had succeeded in drawing all London and made the Metropolis laugh for months, the manager's discretion was justified. But the little comedian could really "build" on any Leno-sque structure, and in this way lay his peculiar ability. One Leno pantomime—under Harris—was quoted as the comedian's biggest success, but the manager lost £8000.

He had a most wonderful, artistic vanity, which once led him into a curious juxtaposition with the late Sir Henry Irving. The Lyceum knight was a great admirer of the pantomime man, and the admiration was well reciprocated. Few of the public who often went to the Tivoli so find that "Owing to sudden indisposition Mr. Dan Leno would not appear" were aware that the "indisposition" took the form of two stalls for himself and his wife at the Lyceum for some new Irvinesque play.

Of all the Irving repertoire that he liked, "Richard III." took his fancy best, and as the little man was a bit of an artist—a fact which very much assisted his make-ups—he managed to develop a fairly good portrait of the hunchback king for a prize dress at one of the Covent Garden Balls, and there one thought it might have ended.

Not so Leno—perhaps it was a symptom of the future debacle, for Dan made up his mind to appear as "Richard III." somewhere—somehow—and quite seriously. Now Irving always looked forward to the Theatrical Fund Benefit at Drury Lane as his one annual personal enjoyment of the Drury Lane funny man. So when he told his dresser not to let him "miss the incomparable Mr. Leno," the Lyceum actor soon found himself standing in the prompt entrance at the Drury Lane matinée till Leno's number went up. What was our astonishment to find that the little comedian, instead of rushing on and asking everybody, "Do you know Mrs. Kelly?" or the Soliloquy on Eggs—"there are eggs (two kinds): Eggs and Election eggs"—or other gems of his humorous repertoire, walked straight on, seriously made up as "Richard

III," and equally seriously ladled out a soliloquy from that work. Protest was useless; Irving stood in the prompt entrance annoyed—dumbfounded—and almost disgusted, for he was soon to follow on the same spot at the same matinée with "The Dream of Eugene Aram." Leno wandered on; the audience sat aghast as he gave certain supposed "imitations" of the great Lyceum tragedian by this time white with rage in the wings, till at length, realizing the awakening of the audience to the real portent of the pitiable scene, Leno suddenly grasped the situation, did a double shuffle (a dancer's step), advanced to the footlights and said to me, "Play a hornpipe, Jimmy," and Richard the Third went off to roaring laughter, doing the old college hornpipe.

Sandringham ruined him. He never recovered from his visit to the late King Edward's party. It is reported that his visit came about in this way. The Duke of Fife, selecting a play for Princess Maud's birthday festivities, decided upon "Scrooge," with Seymour Hicks from the Vaudeville. "But," said Dan in telling the story, "His Majesty wanted something more funny. 'Ah, ha! there you are!' said the 'Dook,'" *i.e.* the Duke of Fife, continued Leno, "'Scrooge' is something funny, but something to make the children laugh?" This may or may not be true, but it is on record that the Queen did ask for "the funny man from Drury Lane," and so it came about that Leno was requisitioned.

About this time Leno stuck exclusively to port wine, and after the Sandringham performance, while he was dressing for supper, one of the King's Equerries asked him his taste in liquid refreshment, suggesting some fine old port vintage "we have in the Royal cellars." "Ha! ha!" said Leno, delighted, "that's me—a bottle of fine old port—not too much crust on it—my teeth are bad."

One of Dan's best stories was about his wife who made the pancakes, but instead of frying them in the pan, fried them on the gridiron—"all went into the fire don't-you-know, burnt." This story somehow or other went very flat at Sandringham, so

when the Equerry returned with the requisite port, he remarked as he filled the comedian's glass, "I say, Mr. Leno—ha-ha-ha—you must not be down-hearted at the poor way that pancake joke of yours went—ha-ha-ha! You see, none of these people—I must laugh—ever saw a gridiron in their lives, but I saw the joke—oh, dear, Mr. Leno, do excuse me—for you must know I *have* seen a gridiron—ha-ha-ha—it really was funny!"

One more instance may be pardoned of his great powers of grasping a situation when it was presented to him. He always wanted to try and preserve the dramatic unities. He would take every play that he appeared in seriously from the drama point of view. To see him arguing with Herbert Campbell as to why Jack *did* climb the beanstalk, or as to the true inwardness of Bluebeard's real homicidal tendencies, or the inconsistencies of Mother Goose really possessing a goose that laid twenty-two carat gold eggs—these were really sublime moments.

A Mr. Milton Bode engaged him to tour a sort of musical play called "Orlando Dando," and Leno made it a stipulation that he should only attend the last week's rehearsal, so the previous three weeks' preparations had to take place in his absence. The first scene was in a barber's shop; the hero—the title-rôle played by Leno—was a hairdresser. On the first morning that the comedian did attend rehearsal there was great anxiety as to what his real opinion would be as to the merits of the play as a vehicle for his humours, and he was asked to make any suggestion to improve his part. I think, therefore, I had better put what occurred into actual dialogue form.

SCENE—A Barber's Shop. The whole act is gone through with Leno watching it and making notes as he went along. To him, on the stage, crowd round Milton Bode, the manager, Captain Basil Hood the author and this dialogue takes place:—

LENO: I see, we have the opening chorus of fifty ladies and gentlemen in my barber's shop.

CAPTAIN HOOD: Yes.

LENO: Then the two lovers meet and arrange a love meeting, and sing a long love duet—in my barber's shop?

MILTON BODE: Yes, quite right.

LENO: Then we have the Four High-Kicking Flappers of Tillerland; they do their number, and get a well-deserved encore—in my barber's shop?

BODE: Yes.

LENO: Then we have three or four more choruses, a rollicking quartette, a patriotic song, and, in fact, everybody who is anybody comes on, does what they like—make appointments, do what they like with the till, dance, sing songs, do breaks downs—all in my shop!

BODE: Yes, Dan, that's quite right, and it all only lasts one hour, this act.

LENO: But don't you think it about time that I shaved somebody? (Tableau.)

With us he was always assisted ably and conscientiously by dear old Herbert Campbell. Herbert was a good stand-by, and we miss him every year. He had, however, a horrible objection to chaff. A wire broke one night in the airship scene, and dropped Leno and Campbell on to the stage—just a shaking up. Campbell's twenty stone fell first, Leno's eleven stone on top of him. Had it been the other way about the results might have been disastrous. The papers were full of it next day, when there was a matinée performance, for which George Grossmith had provided himself with a private box. George wired Leno and Campbell:

"Dear Dan and Herbert. Do please fall out of the balloon again to-day. I want a good laugh.

"GEORGE GROSSMITH"

"D——d silly rot!" said Herbert. "Might have been a matter of life and death—so silly to joke about such a thing. Push off the Pier, Sons of Phoenix all." "Push off the Pier," was a slangism for "drinks-round"—always used by Campbell as an alternative to "have a cup of tea." "Sons of

the Phoenix " is a philanthropic Tontine Society who carry on large excursions in the summer at the seaside, and for whose charity smoking concerts Herbert was always generously useful.

Every one knows that Leno came from the Surrey, viâ Charlie Hawtrey's "Atalanta" at the Strand. Hawtrey heard of the Surrey success, which also caused Augustus Harris to engage him. He played in the second edition of "Atalanta," with the handsome Alma Stanley, and made a first-night failure into a *quasi* second-notice success; but Manchester claimed the beautiful Alma for the pantomime, and Drury Lane claimed Leno. As the present writer described it at the time :—

"The booking went up, up, up.
They threatened to draw the Town,
When Alma and Leno
Were not to be seen-o
The bookings went down, down, down."

Alma Stanley I now find has developed into a clever Suffragette lecturer, and is fit and well.

The Drury Lane pantomime has wonderfully metamorphosed in the last three decades. From E. T. Smith, 1862, to Chatterton, 1879, and on to the present day, the three periods have been instructive. It is ridiculous for people to state that pantomime has declined. It has not declined; it has only changed but increased its public. In Chatterton's time, the "Opening" was quite a modest affair, and was once produced in September, and the harlequinade which was added on Boxing Night became somewhat more elaborate; but Chatterton's public was a few rows of five-shilling or seven-shilling stalls, a huge eightpenny pit, and a seething mass of sixpenny and fourpenny galleryites, who cat-called the "opening" on Boxing Night till not a word on the stage was heard. The shilling pit and the sixpenny gallery boy shouted the latest music-hall songs. The better educated audience of to-day is not the chorus-singing urchin or patron of the 'Seventies. The top gallery disappeared under the London County Council during the end of the

Harris management, and the stalls on Boxing Night have developed into a kid-gloved army of *dilettante* patrons, across whose apathetic well-dined and gloriously-gloved personalities it is a far run to get to the pit for a good honest round of applause. Few people were ever able to account for the Early Victorian hissing of "God Save the Queen," at Drury Lane Boxing Night, till it was discovered that the one siffleur was purposely put there to arouse the loyalty of the entire house which ultimately drowned with patriotic cheers the strains of "Rule Britannia." This accounts for the tradition that in a Drury Lane pantomime alone is Rule Britannia allowed to follow the National Anthem.

Twenty-five years wandering over the British Isles, many weeks—aye, months—I might say, never having slept in the same bed twice, having explored every hamlet or village in my professional capacity, from John o' Groats to Land's End, I one morning woke up to find myself the full-fledged mayor of a South Coast watering town.

How it came about is past, and local, history, but if I say that in combination of twenty-four aldermen and councillors, at least twenty-one were my esteemed friends and that the remaining three were "Anti-Glover" in local politics, it will seem sufficiently Irish if I say that it was the minority who forced my election to my municipal dignity.

The most interesting attribute of a mayoralty in my mind is the two years' *ex-officio* magistracy which it automatically confers.

I must say that I always had an ambition that way. "Get out of mi way, ye blag-guard," shouted a Lord Mayor, Charles Dawson (in private life a baker), one day, when he drove to the Mansion House in Dublin, to a loafer who stopped his Lordship's carriage. "Ah, go on wid ye, ye twelve months' aristocrat!" retaliated the jackeen. So did I often have an ambition to be a "twelve months' aristocrat," and so it was achieved in 1905.

London dined me with T. P. O'Connor, M.P., in the chair, and Marshall Hall, K.C., M.P., in the vice-chair, and I felt that I had at least done some-

thing more or less out of the way for a travelling musician.

I gave no banquet on the day of my election, postponing it till a later date, when my dear friend, Hall Caine, came down to honour me—so I gladly accepted the invitation to dine that evening with the Mayor of Eastbourne.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but do you mind—the King wants to speak to you on the telephone."

This remark, which was made to me by a waiter at this municipal banquet, was the first humorous experience that I had of the real responsibilities of my mayoral office. I hurriedly gulped the remaining mouthful of "*Sole-à-la-something*," and rushed to the instrument, to find that having had a message of thanks for the Mayor of Bexhill from Sandringham, from His Majesty (to whom the Council had that day sent the usual birthday congratulation), the postal authorities refused to deliver the same unless to the Mayor personally; so I "took it off the 'phone." I then prepared to take my new office very seriously.

It is one of the prerogatives of a South Coast seaside town, that no matter what endeavour in the way of good you may make, some one will disagree with you and even go so far as to inundate you with anonymous letters giving you their opinion of your worthlessness. This at one time, previous to my mayoralty, became rather a nuisance; and as I had been given to understand that locally it was a common custom, and the locals attacked could not afford to retaliate, I made up my mind to scotch it once for all, which I did in a very simple way. The anonymous letter blackguard very soon fell into my hands, so I wrote the following reply to the Editor of the local paper in answer to this "courageous" person:

"SIR,

"If your correspondent is not ashamed of the name that his mother gave him, and will kindly subscribe it to his scurrilous effusion, I may think it worth while to reply."

Of course, having told all his friends to look out for what "Glover says next week," this local Jeremiah pest soon ceased; but the desired effect did not last for long, for the moment I became Mayor, my "friend" favoured me with one more not too complimentary, but a perfectly innocuous "personality." I have a preference for dressing myself to suit the climate. Ninety degrees in the shade rather leans me towards immaculate white ducks and suchlike tropical attire, and although my adipose tissue, since remarkably diminished, was not the kind which lends itself to a favourable exposition of the very fine delicacies of form, still I managed, with the help of a good West-end "snip," to decorate my mayoral presence in a more or less becoming manner. This, however, gave very great umbrage to the anonymous friend, and he celebrated my mayoralty by emerging from his seclusion once more, and letting me have another specimen of the "Polite Letter-writer." Here it is:

"How dare you walk down Devonshire Road" (Bexhill's leading street) "in white ducks—you, who look more like a pork-butcher than a musician?"

Now I have many excellent pork-butchers in my acquaintance, and they, like their chops, are decidedly thin; therefore I could not quite grasp the point of this humour.

Another experience was rather of an amusing nature. It was as follows. The Mayor is *ex-officio* a member of all the committees, and these include the Fire Brigade. A habit had arisen of borrowing the escape for the purpose of doing some five or six-story house-painting, and it was thought advisable that it should be understood that the escape should not be borrowed except with the permission of the Chairman of the Committee or the Mayor. What was my astonishment, then, to get during the dress-rehearsal of the Drury Lane pantomime, on Christmas Eve, the following telegram:

"*May we borrow the fire-escape? There is some trouble at Little Common*" (an outlying district) "*and we may want it.*"

"Holy Moses!" as Conn the Shaughraun would say. I jumped out of the orchestra in the middle of the big scene. Arthur Collins thought I had gone mad. I rushed up to the telephone, had a feverish quarter-of-an-hour to get through, and then only found that the possessor of a very high school wanted some decorations laid out for some Christmas Day celebration, and as the majority of the fire brigade were local builders, he had retained them, and they required the fire-escape to use as a ladder.

It was during my year of office that the great "Limerick" craze existed, and perhaps some of the most humorous incidents arose when I was selected as a "Limerick" judge for a popular weekly. A last-liner managed to send in the following, with knowledge no doubt that the musical aptness would appeal to me:

"Wagoners, carmen, bend their backs low and grin." The line was made to read:

"Wagner's 'Carmen' bend their Bach's 'Lohengrin.'" And for this I awarded £20. This brought me a flood of protesting correspondence; but perhaps the most amusing was a gentleman—an important London musician—who wrote me and said:

"May I draw your attention to the fact that Wagner did not write 'Carmen,' and John Sebastian Bach, the poor old cantor of Leipsic, was dead before any of them lived, and did not write 'Lohengrin'? I am surprised at a man of your eminence in the musical profession not knowing this before?"

It is therefore dangerous to joke or "Limerick."

In the course of this Limerick-judging the personal took a large place, and from them I find that I have been a bigamist, an adulterer, a wife-beater, a polygamist, and every possible unpleasant thing that one could imagine.

But one I must quote—the last—from a gentleman who wrote from the North of England, and said :

“ At the meeting of all the important inhabitants of this town, convened at the ‘ Bull and Thrush,’ the following resolution was unanimously passed, and I was instructed to forward same to you :

“ That James M. Glover, Mayor of Bexhill, Judge of Limericks, be unanimously elected to the first vacancy at Colony Hatch.”

At the election which qualified me for the possible mayoralty I had a quaint household experience. I had an Irish housekeeper, possessed of a humour entirely her own. I said to her one morning, in London, “ Maloney, let’s pack up our things and go to Bexhill. There’s an election on there; I’m a candidate.”

Being Irish she jumped for joy. Any chance suggestion of a fight appealed to her native humour, and the word “ Election ” opened up possibilities.

When we arrived, I pointed out to her that, as we were only stopping for two days, it was not necessary to order large supplies of comestibles, and that economy was the order of the household. At the time I was retiring Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, which licensed the local boatmen and fishermen. I met one of these worthies with a huge haul of fish round his neck.

“ Good morrow, Bill Ball.”

“ Good morrow, governor.”

“ Well, Bill, you seem to have had a good night’s fishing? ”

“ Oh yes, sir! but what am I to do with it? There’s nowhere to sell it; it will go for next to nothing.” There is no market at Bexhill, and the only two fish emporiums cannot exhaust any great “ catch ” that may suddenly arrive.

With that he shouldered two huge plaice, which crowned the top collection of his haul. So with a view to help him, I said, “ Bill, take these big ones round to my house, and tell the housekeeper I said she was to take them in. She will pay you, and it

will help you to pay your expenses to go to Hastings to sell the rest." Bribery was not in my mind, but sympathy I thought was useful at election time—at a small outlay.

I was sitting alone at my lunch table, just finishing, when the Hibernian Hebe burst into the dining-room.

"Oi say, sir!"

"Well, what is it?"

"There's a man downstairs who's brought two huge fish. What the devil are we to do with them?"

"Oh, it's all right! this is election time."

"Is it? But then who the devil is to eat them? This is only Wednesday, and I only eat fish on a Friday, and you, God help you! never touch it." I am afraid this was a home thrust at my non-observance of my religious penalties.

"Never mind. It's election time. We do a lot of things at this period that we don't do any other time."

"Oh! do we? It's just like you to be complaining about the household expenses being too big, and here now you want me to buy two fish, both of them as big as a Dreadnought."

"Never mind, Maloney! I have given my orders—this is election time. I repeat, we do a lot of things during elections that we never think of doing at any other period."

"So I notice."

With this she turned on her heel and went downstairs and held what she would describe as an independent "dialogue" to herself on these lines: "It's election time, is it? Yes; we do a lot of things at election time. Them two's enough fish to feed all the Catholics in Bexhill for a month of Fridays. But it's his money; he can do what he likes with it. Then he growls that the books are too big. Oh! I see, it's election time. Let him have his way." (Of course this was a minor detail, as I intended having my own way.)

I heard a mild discussion going on downstairs between the fisherman and the housekeeper. I

then shouted out that the fisherman could have a liberal allowance of the wine of Scotland and the fizzing water of Schweppes, and I finished my lunch.

Five minutes afterwards I heard a noise of some one coming upstairs, mumming to herself the same old refrain—

“Well, it’s his money. He can do what he likes with it.” The door burst open suddenly, and before I could stand up, the two plaice were immediately sliding across my beautiful damask tablecloth, and the lady from Ireland stood before me with her arms akimbo, bellowing into my ear :

“They’re two-and-tuppence, sir, and he is not in our Ward.”

Another quaint experience while I was Mayor of Bexhill, was when I was asked by the West Country Association to respond to a toast on the occasion of the visit of the Lord Mayor, Sir William Treloar, of whom it is said that he “throws oil-cloth on the troubled waters.” My neighbour was Sir William’s popular Sheriff, Sir William Dunn, M.P. After grace the Sheriff took up my card and read out : “The Mayor of Bexhill—James Glover, Esq., J.P. Dear, dear !” he continued. “Why, you’ve got the same name as that advertising chap at Drury Lane who is always getting his name in the papers. It’s perfectly sickening ! Every Sunday morning I take up my ‘Referee’ and see that Jimmy Glover has done this—that—and the other thing.” I replied, “Yes, it’s awful !” In my speech later in the evening I soon convinced Sir William of “my advertising power.”

CHAPTER X

The Collins *régime* continued—A human document—Jimmy Harrington—Dan Leno outwitted—The relief of Ladysmith as a pantomime “gag”—Sir Herbert Tree and the new Lady Macbeth—other Tree-isms—Von Bulow—Cecil Raleigh and his collaboration—Harry Hamilton—England’s adversities and Cecil Raleigh’s play—Hoaxing Ancona with the Queen’s present—How the tenor got ready for Covent Garden in Italy—Stories of the late King Edward—Disfiguring the Band-Parts—Landon Ronald’s commencement—Henry Neville’s orchestral experience.

THE Collins *régime* is full and rich with interesting detail, but I am only touching on its fringe. This year is 1912—Drury Lane now attains its centenary, because two great conflagrations happened about that time—the burning of Moscow and a similar conflagration at Drury Lane, after which the “Renters” started as lessees. All this will be dealt with fully in another volume, and so of this “more anon”—as the villain says to the heroine when he is rejected. But a real human document is the story of the Drury Lane call-boy Jimmy Harrington.

A little street-urchin, dribbling at the nose, collarless, but clean. A hard, intelligent, but plebeian face, with bright blue eyes, one of a gang of fifty waiting round a frost-bitten stage door for work. The boy is engaged, and forms one of an infantile “British Army” that is engaged to dance on the *corpus vile* of Paul Kruger in “Jack and the Beanstalk” pantomime 1890-91. The urchin is trained, for weeks and weeks he goes through the

daily *pabulum* of stage-military exercise. He never varies. Other boys may play the fool, others may joke—others may neglect their business—but he is always the same, attentive, punctual, obedient. He never shirks his work, and thus he is selected for special notice by his superiors.

And yet only a few weeks before that he was selling newspapers in the street. "Echo, sir, Speshul," and he drops his bundle and turns a catherine-wheel for a halfpenny. "Thank-e, sir." But the stage-door loungee receives recognition and, one of fifty, he is engaged.

* * * * *

It is the night of the Relief of Ladysmith. Two great comedians—one Herbert Campbell, the other Dan Leno—consult in their dressing-rooms as to the scene in which they should break the news to the audience. They arrange Scene VII., Part II., but in Scene I., Part I., three hours earlier, a boy brings on a pie to Dame Trot (Dan Leno), who according to the plot is running a bakery. The boy is the same urchin who later on in the evening becomes a performing diminutive guardsman. He usually speaks a four-line rhyme such as :—

" This pie my mother trusts and hopes
That you will burn it not.
In baking it you won't be long.
I'll bring it back, Dame Trot."

On this particular night the boy comes on gaily—more joyous than usual. Dances round Dame Trot, but speaks not his accustomed lines. Stage waits—Leno annoyed. But the boy budes not. At last the great comedian, somewhat chagrined at this interruption of his scene, says, " Boy, why so gay this evening ? "

A pause—a huge giggle by the boy, and then this reply : " Oh, 'aven't you 'erd, I've just relieved Ladysmith ? "—Sensation.

I have never heard such an uproar in a theatre before. It may be remarked that the news of the Relief of Ladysmith had arrived after the doors

were opened, and the audience seated. Of course, Leno and Campbell were furious, but they bore it all good-naturedly enough, although considerably annoyed at being "spoofed."

Two months later I sent for this boy. "What are you, James?" "I'm a Roman Catholic, sir." "No, I mean how do you live?" "Well, sir, there's an ole woman very good to me. During the panto I got nine shillings a week, but that didn't keep me, so I sez to myself, there is one hundred children here working all day, they must have refreshments; so as they don't drink whisky and beer like the big actors, and must have some refreshment, I worked the pineapple trick." "What's that?" I asked, not exactly appreciating what the "pineapple trick" was. "Well, I buys a tin of pineapple for a shilling. I cuts it up in penny and halfpenny slices, and sells it to them. I'm rather handy with my fists, so I sold them a penny slice, but for tuppence I agreed to pummel any other boy they didn't like for them. That didn't last long, though—too many free fights—and I chucked it, so then I started a shoeblack emporium, and there are about a hundred and fifty people in the theatre with dirty boots, so I contracted to do their polishing for tuppence a week, and that was all right, but another boy undercut me—offered to do it for three-halfpence—so I gave him a jolly good thrashing and chucked the game.

"Then I wrote an original drama and gave it twice a day in the *ballet* room (a large room underneath the stage). It was called 'The Soldier Boy's Return from the War, or Mother's Only Joy'—Front seats twopence, Back seats one penny, Back-handers for nothing. This lasted for a time, but when some of my 'audience' wuz late one night in the Kruger scene, Mister D'Auban, the stage manager, kicked up a row, and we had to disband."

"Well, I am going to try your honesty, James. Take this £30 to the bank, and when you come back I will offer you work." I really had no

fears of the boy. His straightforwardness impressed me.

The boy came back in ten minutes with the bank receipt. I then took him to Bexhill, where he "paged" for me, and sold programmes at the Kursaal.

One morning he brought me a letter: "Mr. Henry Arthur Jones requests the pleasure of Mr. James Harrington's company at the Albany to attend the reading of a new play." It appears that the well-known author had seen him in a special matinée at Brighton, for which I had lent him to Charles Frohman.

Shortly he appeared in this play—"The Lackey's Carnival"—by the well-known dramatist, H. A. Jones. The youth made a big success, and I think got £3, 10s. a week. I made him bank all his money. He then (on my suggestion) returned to Drury Lane as call-boy, and became in due course Assistant Stage-Manager. He took much of my advice too literally. But in any leisure moment he studied French, German and Shorthand, and on his twenty-first birthday Mr. Collins presented him with a pocket-book with a "fiver" inside. Enquiries as to what happened to the "fiver" led to the discovery that he had paid it in for a series of Shorthand lessons in Chancery Lane.

He had no parents. I gathered that his religion was selected at an industrial school—he was sent there as he had been abandoned on a doorstep. He really had a big future before him. The boy had great ideas in our business. He read morn and night, and had made up his mind that he was to be a much-read man, even if he was not a well-read boy. To see him pull the strings, ring the bells, and marshal the huge pantomime about in the absence of his superiors was marvellous. He had many a discussion with my cat after she had commandeered the freehold right of half a chicken left by a dear, kind, thoughtful soul, for his supper. He was one of the justifiable results of a well-placed confidence. He had his Drury Lane masters to thank for a great chance in life, and their confidence

was never betrayed, and one day he might have been a big man. Fancy the beginning! The collarless, insufficiently-shoed street urchin at the stage door—in a few short years a position which entitled him to sit in evening-dress at the “Prodigal Son” Supper, given to his master, with his right and left associates, Mr. Hall Caine, Mrs. John Wood and Sir George Alexander.

Alas, one morning I was early awakened by the telephone bell: “Trunk call, sir—it is the Bexhill Exchange. Drury Lane speaking, you will be sorry to hear that Jimmy Harrington died in Charing Cross Hospital this morning—Accident.” He—for a wager—tried to climb up a water-spout in King Street, St. James’—he got to the first floor and fell, spiked on the railings underneath. Poor chap! R. I. P.

The boy Harrington was only one of the peculiar incidents that crop up to one’s mind, and the applications that are received for engagements by the personnel of the theatre have not always such a tragic side about them, but often as not carry a good deal of unlooked-for humour. Every season one had the pleasure of meeting at Drury Lane all the great stars assembled to do duty in some charity cause or other. It is then that our library of jape and quip gets replenished. The following is one of the more recent of such episodes:—It would not be fair to mention the lady’s name, but I have Sir Herbert’s permission to mention his:—

The wife of a leading London manager—herself once a well-known actress—decided to return to the stage, so she thus approached His Majesty’s Manager:

“DEAR SIR HERBERT TREE,

“I intend returning to the stage. Can you find something for me? Anything will do from Lady Macbeth down to the Cloak-room.

“Yours truly,

“_____

“late of—Theatre”

The reply :

“ DEAR MRS ———,

“ We have one Lady Macbeth in the theatre already. She is in the Cloak-room.

“ Yours truly,

“ HERBERT TREE ”

But those of us who remember the recent action of the *matinée* hat nuisance and its exploitation as an advertising coup will better appreciate another good Tree-ism. When he was upbraided by the Theatrical Managers' Association for allowing his wonderful “ Henry VIII.” production to be cinematographed—for one thousand pounds be it understood—his principal assailant was another old friend, Frank Curzon, who expatiated at length on the injury to the legitimate stage that this proceeding would carry. “ Well,” said Tree, “ I have had my cheque, and it has gone through the Bank, so that settles it. As for Mr. Curzon, he is talking through his *Matinée Hat* ! ”

And one often wonders if the hundred and one possible Pattis (in their own mind) who crowd the stage door and ask us to lose our valuable time listening to their singing out of tune really knew how bad they really are. It is a very delicate matter to tell the truth on these occasions, but a rather good story is told of Von Bulow, who was once directing an orchestra, when the *prima donna* sang seriously out of tune. In this case it was the delinquent, and not the director, who stopped the orchestra, to the surprise of every one, and enquired, with all the effrontery of unconscious incompetence, if the “ band was in tune.” “ I don't know,” quickly replied Von Bulow, and to the false-toned vocalist, “ Give us your A.” To the uninitiated the pitch of the orchestra is generally taken from the “ A,” sounded by some staple instrument, usually the oboe.

The humours of rehearsing our various plays are all of a very light-hearted nature, and in many

years I have seldom heard a regretted word or unnecessary incident which one can recall of any serious nature. Tempers will rise, passions will storm, and small vanities will exist, but that is all; but a little turn, a gentle word, or a passing quip, does wonders. For instance :—

Cecil Raleigh, in collaborating with an author whose wife was playing the leading part, found the following situation easily solvable. Dialogue :—

HUSBAND-AUTHOR : I say, Raleigh, my wife wants a strong situation written in here. Her part falls to nothing in this scene. Strengthen the end of the act.

RALEIGH : Not in your sweet life, dear boy. Scene quite long enough.

H.-A. But I protest.

RALEIGH : So you can, till the cows come home.

H.-A. : Nonsense, my dear Raleigh; besides, I am part author of this play, and as such I assert my right. In fact, I insist. I shall now go home, and as part author write in that scene which I think essential to the play's success. That's the value of collaboration.

RALEIGH : Right-o! You go home and write the scene and bring it back to me, and I'll cut it out. *That's* the advantage of collaboration!

And then again :

A young actor at Drury Lane was standing over a trap at rehearsal. "My ambition," he remarked to Harry Hamilton, the author, "is to come up that trap." "You never will," was the quick rejoinder, "it's a Star trap." For the uninitiated a "Star trap" is an aperture in the stage, cut out in the shape of a star, through which demon-acrobats and other pantomimic wild fowl arise in weird moments.

Then again, when Augustus Daly died he possessed the American rights of the Drury Lane drama, "The Great Ruby." His executors were Ada Rehan and Sir Eric Barrington (then Lord Salisbury's private secretary). To Downing Street repaired Arthur Collins in Drury Lane interests, and Cecil Raleigh in the author's, to settle the terms

of the American tour. This was soon done. "That's all, then; I am very glad this little matter is settled—it's not quite in my line," said the secretary to the Prime Minister of England. "Yes," said Raleigh, "all we have to do now is to embody it in a couple of little formal agreements, go to our solicitors, have them engrossed, exchange copies, get them stamped, and there you are!" "Certainly, if you wish it," was the diplomatist's reply, "but you don't doubt my word?" "Not at all," said Raleigh, "but with Kruger and South Africa in one hand just now, and Marchand and Fashoda in the other, I think you're pretty full up; and I can't expect you to worry much over five per cent. on a few hundred dollars—some nights' takings with 'The Great Ruby' in a one-night stand, played by a second-rate company, on a third-rate American tour."

The late Queen Victoria, ten days after every "Command" at Windsor, used to send a diamond pin or other ornament to the principal artistes engaged. Ancona, the baritone, was seriously agitated on one of these occasions, that after a certain effluxion of time his particular present had not arrived. "*La Reine m'a oublié—Rien pour moi—c'est extraordinaire*," till we all got so tired that we determined to teach him a lesson, so one morning the following happening took place.

SCENE—Dress rehearsal of a new work at Covent Garden—"La Navarraise." Stalls full of singers, pressmen, and others; Ancona in the middle. Suddenly during an *entr'acte* a full-dressed Hussar—one of the ordinary messengers of Royalty—arrives, walks into the middle of the stalls, crying out loud, "Signor Hancona!" Sudden astonishment and joy of Ancona as he is handed a large box tied with red ribbon, to which is hanging the real official Windsor seal. Loud cries from surrounding watchers of "What is it?" "Do let us see," "How charming of the Queen!" During all this time the proud baritone was fumbling in his pocket for a coin with which he might reward the Royal messenger. Ancona anxiously tears off the string, and finds a dozen coverings of paper on the principle of

the old conjurer's box trick, and finally reaching the supposed jewel draws out a paste-glass chandelier drop, tied with two pieces of red ribbon, which some of us had prepared for him that morning!

It must be explained that whenever a "Command" performance was given at Windsor, we all, in our various departments, were supplied with cards of invitation, to which were attached the huge Windsor official seal. We had cut off one of these seals, and thus "fabricated" a genuine appearance to an otherwise harmless "spoof."

It was generally understood that in order "*débüter à Covent Garden*" an appearance in Italy was necessary, and so, to ingratiate himself with "Druriolanus," a certain tenor—with private funds—repaired to one of those many Italian towns which boasts periodical seasons of opera to qualify for his London *début*. For the deposited sum of 20,000 francs in advance, a thieving *impresario* consented to run a short season of one month's repertoire of Italian opera, in which the tenor was to be "top dog," and make a necessary number of appearances in his favourite rôles. The theatre was taken, cast, band, chorus engaged, and our tenor in due course made his *début*, which could not be considered as favourable. Never was heard such a pandemonium in an opera-house for years. To run a month on these lines meant ruin to the *impresario*, and as the Italian conspirators had determined not to return a single franc of the deposit something had to be done to save the situation and the remaining portion of the 20,000 francs. The next evening arrived, and our tenor, thoroughly unconscious of the failure he really had made, emerged from his hotel theatrewards to dress for Edgardo in "*Lucia*" the second night's opera.

Now it so happened that two drunken sailors were passing as he left his hotel. He found himself jostled into the roadway, an altercation ensued, and much "*Corpo-di-Bacco-ing*," and many Italian expletives followed—a scuffle—a whistle—and the unfortunate (?) arrival of two *Carabinieri*—when the

luckless tenor was taken to the police-station and charged with assaulting (*sic*) two sailors. Protests were useless, messengers could not be found to acquaint the theatre, hotel, or friends for bail, till midnight, when the jailers relented, and released the Covent Garden aspirant, who awoke the next morning to find the theatre closed, a writ issued against him for another 25,000 francs damages, and an intimation from the *impresario* that he had broken his contract, and ruined the season, which had to be abandoned.

It need hardly be said that the whole thing was a carefully devised "plant" to squeeze the poor operatic aspirant of his extra wealth.

I merely tell the story to accentuate my friend's story in another chapter on the way that these things are managed in Italy.

At Covent Garden we had many evidences of the memory of the late King Edward. Both he and Queen Alexandra were very fond of Luigi Mancinelli—one of the best conductors who ever wielded a baton—and the Queen herself once privately presented the maestro with a small stick with which he used to occasionally conduct.

Another instance of the King's memory is a little musical incident which happened one Sunday night, when he was staying at Lady William Beresford's. There was a small band engaged, with which I was professionally connected, consisting of a piano and six instrumentalists, and in one of the intervals the then Prince of Wales led a lady to the accompanist, addressing that gentleman in these words: "This lady is going to sing us something, but she has no music, so what can you play from memory?" The Prince was informed that, no doubt, whatever the lady might decide to sing, the pianist and orchestra would be only too pleased to "vamp"—*i.e.* improvise. (This was not the word used, although it was the procedure intended.) His Royal Highness then replied, "Do you know 'Honey, Oh, my Honey,' and if you can play it, can the violins join in pizzicato?" This was the one-time popular song from "Little Christopher Columbus,"

sung by May Yohè, the first Lady Francis Hope. The orchestra complied, and H.R.H. was greatly interested in the process of "vamping." He congratulated the musicians, and wound up by saying, "Now let us have 'Lazily, drowsily,' and Braga's 'Serenata.'" So it will be seen that even after this long lapse of time the Prince remembered that "Honey, Oh, my Honey," was played at the Lyric Theatre with a pizzicato accompaniment.

But the late King Edward had always a musical ear, and he also kept a sharp look-out on many things at Covent Garden which any one of his subjects would never dream of his having any interest in.

The question of conductorship at Covent Garden often caused serious trouble. Bevignani was getting old, and one night the then Prince asked Harris, "How long is this going on?" indicating Bevignani—so much so that poor Bevignani had to be asked to retire from "Faust" and other works in his repertoire, and the more modern Mancinelli installed. But the Royal occupant of the omnibus box interested himself in many a small detail. Mancinelli one night forgot his white kid gloves, and the Royal remark was: "Harris, is the opera going to the dogs?" Another occasion the entire orchestra in respect to their leader, who had a great domestic bereavement, wore black ties. This brought a remonstrance from high quarters in no uncertain form, and not a black tie was seen for the rest of the season—save the leader's—he refusing to doff his mourning, even for Royalty. I gathered afterwards that the kindly-natured Prince sent round a sympathetic message explaining his ignorance of the real reason for the departure from the usual routine.

Again, one night, we did "Fra Diavolo." The second tenor was Joseph O'Mara. "Where," said His Royal Highness, "did he come from?" "Oh," said Sir Augustus "one of the new blood!" "There," concluded the future King of England, turning to Mr. Christopher Sykes, "is a chance for you." And turning to Sir Augustus Harris, "My

friend Sykes has a latent talent in this direction. Can you give him a chance?"

The late King, too, was so fond of Wagner that it was found necessary to do "small" Wagner arrangements for the various *petits orchestres* which occasionally visited him at Windsor, Buckingham Palace, or Sandringham. These were generally arranged by Adolf Schmid, Sir Herbert Tree's clever director of music, who was sent to the Haymarket by me as musical director at a time when he was my cello at Drury Lane. His knowledge of orchestration is larger than most musical directors in London, and his name as arranger appears on many of Sir Edward Elgar's works. I have always regretted his loss to me, but Sir Herbert has never ceased thanking me.

One of the principal troubles we encountered at Covent Garden was the carving and cutting about of the various band parts to suit the catarrh-izing exigencies of the various artistes. In early days "Carmen" suffered a good deal in this way, as the rôle lends itself to optional acceptance to mezzos with high registers and soprani with low registers, and in some cases to so-called singers with neither facility. When it first came to this country there was a doubt about its copyright, and five distinct versions were being done; (1) Mapleson's, (2) Gye's, (3) Selina Doloro's, (4) "Cruel Carmen" (Miss Alice Aynsley Cook), (5) Emily Soldene. Soldene was in Glasgow doing two performances a day—to packed business. The musicians being paid 35s. a week, *i.e.* 5s. 10d. a night, and half salaries (2s. 11d.) for matinées. They struck for "opera" terms, asserting that "Carmen" was "comic opera." When Soldene went on to the next town she found this couplet in the flute part. Writing things in the band parts is a favourite amusement of provincial musicians—

"Soldene's collaring all the chips,
Poor Bizet's gone to Heaven,
Here am I playing the principal flute
For a paltry two-and-eleven."

This story is not quite correctly told in Emily Soldene's book, but 'twill serve.

This touring round the country for musical folk is to music what the old stock system was to the drama. There is hardly one of the leading London conductors of any eminence who has not at one time or another been through the mill in this fashion. Sir Henry J. Wood, Thomas Beecham, and Landon Ronald are three excellent specimens.

Landon Ronald, who had previously toured with "L'Enfant Prodigue," had been engaged by Harris as "*maestro al piano*" for his Italian tour at £6 a week, and on his return to London, Sepilli, the Italian maestro, with whom I was working for Harris, asked me to "fill him in" as organist for the "Faust" and "Cavalleria" nights at a guinea a night. This I did, and I guaranteed Ronald—for Sir Augustus Harris—three nights, *i.e.* three guineas a week. This opera season was such a success that the season afterwards we had two conductors, Luigi Mancinelli and Glover—the former for the big operas and the latter for the smaller things. To me fell the lot of "Bohemian Girls," "Maritanas," and the lighter works. Mancinelli did not want to conduct two nights running, so, as he had opened on Easter Saturday, and I had billed him with "Cavalleria" and "Pagliacci" on the Monday, he begged me to conduct "Cavalleria" and "*laissez Landon diriger 'Pagliacci.'*" Sir Augustus Harris willing, I so altered the bills. This was Ronald's first appearance as a conductor in London opera. Personally, I announced myself to conduct "Carmen" at the Crystal Palace on the following Thursday, but as the management of the season was taking up all my time, I asked Ronald if he would like to do "Carmen." There were several reasons for this. I had had a wider experience of the Crystal Palace band. Away from August Manns, when they played in the theatre for the travelling conductor—a more competent—impertinent—sulky—lazy—always late at rehearsal division, I never knew. And I did not see why I should lose my time and my temper with them.

Ronald would not be allowed to conduct at Drury Lane without a rehearsal. At the Palace they had to give him one, and so I let him have it. To this he consented, brought down his dear old father—the octogenarian, Henry Russell (never-to-be-forgotten author of “Cheer-boys-Cheer,” “A Life on the Ocean Wave,” etc.), to see him, and the old man was so thankful for this lift-up to his son, that he stood me tea, kissed me, and promised me a grand piano on my wedding. Afterwards, Ronald got “Faust” into his repertoire, and this was his commencement as a splendid conductor, modestly but seriously begun.

But, after all, Ronald found the orchestra much more useful than Henry Neville, that once popular leading man, who, it is not generally known, played the violin in Covent Garden Orchestra.

Neville’s brother, at the time acting in a provincial touring company, wrote to him—

“DEAR HARRY,

“Don’t play the fiddle any longer for 35s. a week, or you will live and die and end at 35s. Come on tour and act. The worst kind of actor can commence at £4.”

CHAPTER XI

Comic Opera—"Chilperic" again—Arthur Sullivan—The prejudices exhibited towards light music in academic institutions—"The Lost Chord" as a horn-pipe—Farnie's great genius—French operas and their mode of transplanting—Musical comedy—"La Poupée"—Songs, ancient and modern—"Killarney"—Edmund Falconer—"Spring, Gentle Spring"—Boucicault and "Babil and Bijou" and "The Shaughraun"—"Dorothy" and "Queen of my Heart"—"Tommy Atkins"—"Soldiers of the Queen"—"The Absent-minded Beggar"—How Sullivan wrote it—who "scored" it—"Two Lovely Black Eyes"—"The Man who Broke the Bank"—"Beer, Glorious Beer"—The Trocadero—in the days of music-hall "Lions" before mutton-chop "Lyons"—Paulus' season—the "free-list"—Banking the cheques—The wrong india-rubber stamp.

THERE are few arts which have passed through so many changes as the cult of Comic Opera. Slow in being accepted seriously when it was first introduced into this country, in its French form, I mean, by the Brothers Mansel at the Lyceum ("Chilperic" in 1871), it had a certain vogue due to Alexander Henderson and his adapting henchman, H. B. Farnie. But indifference soon told his tale.

Hervé really invented comic opera, and had a short rivalry with Offenbach—only a short one—as Offenbach completely wiped out the ex-tenor composer who was always a little mad, dying shortly after an attack upon reading a captious criticism of one of his works by Henri Fouquier in "*Le Figaro*." Perhaps Hervé never really survived his association as "*maitre de Musique*" with some

poor "dementis" in a French asylum at Bicêtre, for whom he used to organize and conduct concerts and musical entertainments. Nevertheless, Augustus Harris brought him to The Empire to write many beautiful ballets even as the Gattis—at an earlier period, as I have recorded—engaged him to direct promenade concerts at Covent Garden.

But Offenbach spluttered out, and interest in foreign work waned—except for an occasional Lecocq success like "Pepita," or Audran's triumphs "La Mascotte" and "La Poupée." From this period onwards—perhaps it was the death of Alexander Henderson, Farnie and Reece—nothing was done to keep the light school alive, and when one reflects that it took twenty-three years for Offenbach's "Contes d'Hoffman" to cross the Straits of Dover, it will be quite evident that something was radically wrong. Since the death of Arthur Sullivan, not one of our young composers had ever been taught to write a really dramatic number. The higher-toned English musicians who were prepared to sneer at Sullivan's class of work are never inclined, in their various academic capacities, to teach the young idea how to shoot into lighter vein, assuming for purposes of argument that the raw material existed.

The only man that made any headway in the Sullivan method, but whose early demise precluded him doing anything very serious, was Edward Solomon, who wrote about twenty operas in the genuine comic opera style, most of which attained a fair, if not lasting, success. But Solomon was of the theatre—theatrical.

Solomon had humour. His hornpipe to a counter-melody of "The Lost Chord" brought a friendly protest from Arthur Sullivan:—

"DEAR TEDDY,

"I wrote 'The Lost Chord' in sorrow at my brother Fred's death" (Fred Sullivan was a comedian and the original Judge in 'Trial by Jury')—don't burlesque it."

Thus wrote Sullivan, the morning after it was played in the Guards' burlesque.

His orchestration was punctually topical—in fact, it may be taken as "aggravated" Sullivan. Sullivan's musical parodies and topical suggestions were all lightly done—such as the old "Lancers" reference in "The Mikado's" song. Solomon's was broader but less musicianly fun. In a farce which contained a domestic cooking scene somebody dropped a red herring—this succulent morsel being vulgarly known in slang as "a red soldier." Vocally treated Teddy punctuated it with a musical reference in two bars of "Let me like a soldier fall." To the musician this was apparent; to the non-musician it was so much musical Greek. But for all that he was a little genius, we miss him greatly, and his death made a great musical void.

Of course, when musical comedy came in, it immediately filled up the gap, and though it flooded the stage with a large number of useless character studies, it supplied the orchestra with a large number of rule-of-thumb musicians, who hammered out "something resembling a tune" to the first music hack encountered. When the chorus lady who sang one song became a *prima donna*, when every chorus man in modern evening-dress became a Sims Reeves, any chance there was for writing for the musical stage from a comic opera or dramatic standpoint, faded away. Who is there now who could write a Savoy *finale* to an Act I. lasting twenty-five minutes and not bore the public? Nobody. The thread of music drama in the old days stretched from Act I. to Act III. Now, it is a common thing to cut out either act after the first night, and nobody suffers. "Now we've got good notices from the critics," said Seymour Hicks the morning after one of his first nights, "let's call a rehearsal and cut out the plot." It is recorded of my old friend, George Edwardes, that he telegraphed to a well-known author: "Come at once—great idea to alter your play." The author came, and George beamed on him, "We're going to play the second act first."

H. B. Farnie on the other hand, the much-despised

Scotch journalist from Cupar Fife, had his school of composers and executants to write round, assisted by collaborateur Robert Reece, and, granted the drama, who were these puppets? Pattie Laverne, who married a carriage builder in Long Acre, Selina Delaro, Emily Soldene, who married a Mr. Powell, Pauline Rita (wife of one of our most eminent flautists), Florence St. John, Violet Cameron, who became Mrs. de Bensuade—or “Brandy and Soda” as we called him for short—Tilly Wadman, who married Wiggy Jervis, Angelina Claude, and a host of others; and when we come to the male department—Henry Bracy, Henry Ashley, Harry Cox, W. S. Rising, not to mention Charles Manners, just retired having made his “pile” out of “unprofitable” English opera, W. H. Hamilton, and scores of others. These were the people who could always be well-fitted, and could always give a good account of themselves.

Farnie, who always kept one eye on Paris and one on London, had a wonderful knack of turning a Parisian failure into a London success. I shall never forget the annoyed look on the author, Albert Vanloo's face on the night of the “*répétition generale*” of “*Les Droits d'Ainesse*,” when the late Alfred Hays, the Library Agent of New Bond Street, walked out at the end of the first act in Paris, called for “a bottle of bubbly”—Pelican-ese for champagne—remarking that he did not want to hear any more, and handed them one thousand pounds on deposit for the English rights across the table in the little restaurant near the Bouffes Parisiennes in the Passage Choiseul.

The French version was a poor success in Paris, and as it turned out, it was a good thing that Alfred Hays did not go back. He might have stopped the cheque. Farnie had his eyes open all the time, saw where the weak points existed, and when it was produced at the Comedy Theatre as “*Falka*,” it made one of the greatest successes of the season. One could see the master hand had been at work. Afterwards it was sent on tour by Alexander Henderson, but he tired of his country speculations

always too soon, and his own musical director, Van Biene, and an actor named Horace Lingard, ran down to Northampton and bought him out for a specific sum, making their fortunes thereby.

Even the adaptation of the "Mascotte," from the point of view of those who saw the French version, was a *tour de force*. Farnie was to the musical play what Dion Boucicault was to the average drama, but we have no Farnie now to go to Paris, and pick up the plays and so arrange them for English taste without completely destroying the original idea. "Veronique" and "The Michus" and "The Merry Widow," have, in some sense, made a *crescendo* of artistic demand in light opera, but they stand alone.

"Veronique" was hawked about in this country for two years. I had an option for T. H. French in New York on its English rights for 48 hours, which I did not exercise through a blunder in a telegram office and wrong delivery of a message of acceptance. For six months it lay in the hands of an English Duke, as representing a syndicate. Then, to flatter André Messager, its composer, who married "Hope Temple" (Dolly Davis, sister of Mrs. Sam Lewis), it was done at the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill, by a French troupe under the auspices of the Covent Garden *régime*, when it drew all London to hear it in a language that half London did not understand, which led to its being produced in English. "Les Petits Michus" was for four years in the portfolio of Arthur Collins, and two years in the possession of another manager, before any one would look at it.

Comic opera, however, is not dead—only everybody at one time went about saying so, and nobody produced it. Now the revival has come—thank goodness. But the students in our schools are not taught *pratique*, or utility; so they go on with their "Variation in F. Minor," their "*fugues* interwoven with Bach and Beethoven" and *cui bono*? It is much the fault of the "additional number" craze—eight bars of a double-forte symphony cut off with a pair of scissors; "sixteen bars and

refrain, twice through, up stage, and back for *encore* " which often as not does not come—and the audience which went mad over "The Torpedo and the Whale," or "The Legend of the Crosse-Caisse," now rolls in its own plushed stall to :—

"Mary Jane of Tooting
Was a proper sort of girl
When her sweetheart from his office
got the 'push.'

"But Mary knew a thing or two,
And bolted with an Earl,
So they're living now in naughty
Shepherd's Bush."

When the 500th night of "La Poupée " arrived, Audran came over to be present, and was doubtless glad that neither he nor his collaborateur, Ordonneau, had allowed one single number to be introduced other than their own writing. How different when the "Pinafore " craze was on in America, and one singer sang of "Josephine " as "My Sweetheart when a Boy."

The story of the success of "H.M.S. Pinafore " does not seem to have been accurately told. It is well known that the First Lord who stuck "close to his desk and never went to sea . . . to be ruler of the Queen's Navee " was a sly shaft at the then First Lord of the Admiralty—the late W. H. Smith. But "Pinafore " fell flat at first, and in the action which arose over the Opera Comique lease and the fight which ensued—a real scrimmage, when Rutland Barrington tells me his very Captain Corcoran clothes were torn to shreds—it came out that the second night's receipts were a matter of only £14 odd.

The row occurred in this way. D'Oyly Carte was manager of the Comedy Opera Company, Ltd., and Lord Kilmorey, the owner of the Opera Comique, would only give a limited lease to the Company, preferring to have a personal tenant in Mr. Carte himself—and on this basis all the contracts were made to finish on a certain date, June 30th, and on

July 1st, when the "Company" came to enter their own theatre as they thought, the row began, and as Mr. Carte had three years' personal agreements with all the artistes, and Gilbert and Sullivan the authors with him, he carried the day. For some time, in consequence of this trouble, the copyright of "Pinafore" was questioned, everybody concerned holding that the registered rights were their own specific vested interest, with the result that more or less concurrent with the Opera Comique run performances by rival combinations at the now defunct Royal Aquarium and Olynpic Theatres also took place. D'Oyly Carte, however, having the authors, the operas and the artistes with him, the rest is history only too well known—the Savoy was built out of the profits made at the Opera Comique, and all went happy as a marriage bell till the famous "carpet" split, which was not accurately related in the obituaries of the late Sir William Gilbert.

The story current at the time was that the Savoy Theatre was owned by two separate entities. Gilbert, Sullivan and Carte—a *tria juncta in uno*, as ground landlords, and D'Oyly Carte *per se* as a tenant of the trio. It is stated that a carpet bought for the lessee *per se* was charged to the *tria-juncta-uno* account perfectly justifiably, and Gilbert objected. Sullivan agreed that Carte was right, and so came the little rift in the managerial lute. There was also said to be some dissatisfaction on the part of Gilbert over his investment in the Savoy Hotel, but that was evidently only a side issue.

Mr. Fletcher, of Saltoun, knew a wise man who cared little "who should make the laws of a nation" so long as he was "permitted to make all the ballads," a more or less excellent sentiment which if practised in these times might do a good deal towards leading certain popular and patriotic ideals to their honourable end. We all know—to mention only a few, the revolutionary advantages of "Ça Ira"—"The Marseillaise"—Mehul's "Chant du Départ"—stolen by Braham for "The Death of Nelson" (let me here parenthetically remark that

in Paris the great success of Offenbach's "La Fille du Tambour Major" was Mehul's "Chant du Départ," but when it was done at the Alhambra in London this climax was a great failure, as the British public recognized the tune as "The Death of Nelson").

There are in modern records many inaccuracies to be dealt with.

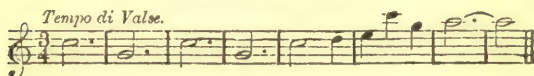
First, in Mr. Harold Simpson's "A Century of English Ballads," it is stated that Balfe wrote "Killarney" for Dion Boucicault. This is quite an error. I have it on the authority of Mrs. Edmund Falconer, whose husband was the original Danny Mann in "The Colleen Bawn," that Balfe wrote "Killarney" for her husband for introduction into one of his Irish dramas (I think "Peep o' Day"), and that Falconer gave Balfe almost his last hundred pounds for so doing. "We could ill afford the money," said Mrs Falconer. "It was all our savings at the time, but Edmund would part with it." And to this Edmund nodded. This took place in 1876, when the Falconers stopped with my family in Dublin—the time the dramatist was doing a libretto to Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" for my grandfather. Edmund Falconer was manager of Drury Lane in 1866.

Another error in the same book is about "Spring, Spring, Gentle Spring." It is here stated that Rivière hawked it about, and it was refused by every London publisher. Nothing of the sort! Rivière himself was in partnership with the elder Oliver Hawkes, in the music-publishing trade in Leicester Square, to which house he had just then removed from Soho Square. Hawkes was a horn player in Queen Victoria's Private Band, and the firm of Rivière and Hawkes actually printed the waltz before it was sung, and I am told it was actually rehearsed from the proof sheets, although Rivière nearly sold it afterwards to Mr. Hopwood. It made an enormous success. Except "Silver Threads among the Gold" I do not know of any piece of music in those days which obtained so great a vogue. It was published in three different

keys, as a fantasia, a waltz, a song, a quadrille, a polka, with three different band arrangements of string, brass, fife and drum, as an "Air varie" for a great flute-soloist, and many other versions. Hopwood, of Hopwood & Crew, offered £20 for it, but Rivière and Hawkes stuck to it, and the composer netted £2000 for his share of the royalties.

A similar success—also let it be marked again in Covent Garden—was A. Gwyllym Crowe's "See-Saw." This was written on what some of the older musicians call the "catchy fourth," *i.e.* the first interval of the melody descends a fourth—and there are thousands of examples of this melodic mechanism. I will to prove my case quote only three of the more popular which will arise in the public mind—Crowe's waltz, the Bell song from "Les Cloches de Corneville," and the Soldiers' Chorus from Gounod's "Faust."

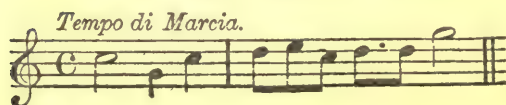
1. The See-Saw waltz.



2. The Bell song, "Cloches de Corneville."



3. Gounod's "Faust," Soldiers' Chorus.



To simplify matters, I have written all these in the same key, but it will be found that they each of them lead off with an interval of a fourth—C to G—

descending. It has no musical significance, and is merely a trick of the trade—curious to note.

"Spring" was Rivière's only great success as a composer, although as an arranger he did a lot of good work, but he was in his zenith at this time, and as a French poet had it:—

"L'eau va toujours à la Rivière.
C'est un fait dûment constaté
C'est un dicton très populaire
D'incontestable vérité."

"Babil and Bijou," in which "Spring, Gentle Spring" was introduced, was Boucicault's biggest artistic failure, and the late Earl Londesborough's greatest financial loss.

Speaking of Boucicault, he loomed large about this period. His "Shaughraun" was packing Drury Lane, and he appealed to Mr. Disraeli to liberate the Irish political prisoners as a concession to the great English sympathy shown to the Drury Lane play. At this time there were many Irish "treason" prisoners in Australian jails, and Boucicault wanted to credit the Drury Lane cheers to a demand for "Amnesty" which was well agitating the public mind at the time, but Disraeli accused him of "playing to the gallery to advertise his forthcoming tour," and refused—when questioned in the House of Commons to interfere.

This the dramatist scornfully repudiated, and to prove his sincerity, Dion Boucicault threw up his personal interest—a matter of hundreds of thousands of pounds—and allowed the part of "Conn" in the "Shaughraun" to be played by anybody. One of the originals was an actor named Hubert O'Grady, to whom Boucicault on the first night of the production of the "Shaughraun" at the Gaiety, Dublin, wired from America:

"For heaven's sake cut down the Wake scene, or all's up."

"Conn, the Shraughraun," in this production was afterwards played by a great comedian named Charlie Sullivan.

On his deathbed in Liverpool, Charlie Sullivan,

whom I knew very well, was in the last throes of pneumonia. "Good night, Charlie," said the Doctor, grasping his hand, "I'll see you in the morning." "I know you will," said Charlie, "but the question is—will I see you?" He died two hours later.

E. T. Smith once offered Boucicault Drury Lane Theatre. "Six thousand pounds, old man; you walk in, I walk out" said E. T. Smith over a dinner conversation.

"Six thousand pounds you give *me*—you stop in—I keep out."

But to resume about songs. "Tommy Atkins," one of the few rousing ditties which will last, and possesses something more than a mere ephemeral topicality, came to the front in a weird fashion. Harry Hamilton had been commissioned to write six songs for a play called "Captain Fritz," for a Mr. Charles Arnold—the original Tony in "My Sweetheart"—the play (not Hamilton's) was a failure, but George Edwardes heard the song in the country production and noted its great possibilities, and Arnold for a consideration willingly dispossessed himself of the London rights in Mr. Edwardes' favour. It was as rousing a redcoat lyric as ever was written, and when it was introduced on the first night of "The Gaiety Girl" into that play, it created a sensation at the Prince of Wales'. The music was written by an old friend of mine, Sam Potter, the musical director of the now defunct Sam Hague's Minstrels at Liverpool. Sam Hague was a kind of provincial Moore and Burgess. Mr. Wilcocks, the publisher of "Tommy Atkins," when he discovered what an Eldorado he possessed, tried to "corner" the burnt-cork chef's future output, and—it is said—received this laconic reply:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I am in receipt of your kind favour. I have lots of better songs than 'Tommy Atkins,'—five shillings each. I never charge less.

"Yours truly,

"SAM POTTER."

Leslie Stuart (or Barrett, as his real name is) could tell some funny experiences of resuscitated songs. In 1881, he wrote one for an Exhibition of the Manchester Ship Canal at Blackpool. Nobody in their wildest enthusiasm could call the Exhibition or the song successes, but many years later I heard Hayden Coffin sing in "An Artist's Model" at Daly's, a sarcastic ditty about "The Soldiers of the Queen, who loved to stop at home and let the others go out to fight," to the same melody. This unpatriotic idea was not a success, and in that form the song had a short life. But not so for Leslie! He never let a good tune drop. Up it bobbed serenely as the real "Soldiers of the Queen" during the African war recruiting period and took England by storm.

I know of so many instances where judgment has erred as to songs, that only one or two will suffice. The sensational success of an evening of successes in "Florodora" was "Tell me, pretty maiden." It is generally said that its excision was nearly insisted upon at rehearsal, but a more flagrant instance was Shiel Barry's nearly carrying his point to have the miser scene eliminated from the "Cloches de Corneville."

I took Fragson, the popular French Chanteur, to Willie Boosey to sell six songs—Boosey bought five, but absolutely refused to touch "Whispers of Love." As we went out of the door I said, "Come, Fragson, we'll try Ascherberg (another publisher) with it." "Well," said Boosey, "throw it in with the rest, but I don't want it." It made the more sensational success of the pantomime and the season; the other five—well, nobody ever heard of them.

It was absolutely impossible to get poor dear lazy Arthur Sullivan to do "The Absent-Minded Beggar." The then plain Alfred Harmsworth raved, Kennedy Jones telephoned, the entire staff of the "Daily Mail" lived on the composer's doorstep in Victoria Street; but to no purpose, and the song was announced to be sung at the Alhambra on a fast-approaching Monday evening. So,

Kennedy Jones got on the 'phone to Sullivan's secretary, Wilfred Bendall, and asked him to do "something like 'Tommy Atkins'" the opening strains of which Kennedy hummed on the 'phone, and in a few hours down to George Byng's music room in the Alhambra the MS. of the piano and voice part was triumphantly carted. Byng sat up late, scored it, and the eulogisms of the Press the next morning spoke highly of "the well-known musicianly orchestration of Sir Arthur Sullivan." "In his best Savoy style." "Sullivan-esque" to a degree.

Many years ago I travelled with an "Adamless Eden" Company—of ladies only. In our repertoire we had a sentimental song called "My Nellie's Blue Eyes." A parodied version of the song found its way into the hands of Mr. Charles Coborn, who with "Two Lovely Black Eyes," drew all London to the Trocadero. But Coborn, who prided himself on his French, and Lord "Ned" de Clifford—Pelicans both—made a serious slip when they worked out a French version of the chorus in the old Pelicon Club. Coborn was a very good French scholar but they could only get at :

*"Deux beaux yeux noirs,
Moi, ciel quel horreur,"* etc.

which, as Euclid says, is absurd, for "*noir*" is black in the sense of colour—if black can be a colour. "*Pochè a l'œil*" is to blacken the optic by force; and the line should have read :—

"Deux beaux yeux pochès!

But Coborn stuck to his guns. Besides, it was a beautiful Cockney rhyme to "*horreur*"! but it occasioned a rather pleasant Royal incident which is interesting. One evening I met the late Duke of Clarence at a smoking concert given at the excellently managed Beaufort Club—the latter fact not surprising when such a fine old gentleman and man

of the world as the late Duke of Beaufort was head of affairs. At these particular soirées, the Duke was round and about, and if not doing, at any rate was always seeing things properly done. It was intimated that Prince Albert Victor had graciously consented to look in at the Beaufort smoking concert on the particular night of the visit, when the Duke was in the chair, and the fact was kept very dark. The result was the Royal visitor came, and apparently spent a very pleasant night, and made everybody exceedingly comfortable. Everybody was delighted to see His Royal Highness with so many of his father's good qualities and genial tastes, and he certainly showed none of the shyness which he had by common gossip been charged with.

He sat and applauded, and evidently appreciated what is called "good music," and was the first to laugh at a good joke, and a funny song, when it came along. We were all more or less young men then, and he felt at home and made us feel so too. During a portion of the evening I sat within two rows of the chair, and it did my heart good to see him join with us in raising the roof by shouting the chorus of this almost "National Anthem," "Two Lovely Black Eyes." When, however, the comic singer sang what he called the already mentioned French version, "*Deux beaux yeux noirs*"—which, as I said, is not French at all—I saw H.R.H.'s brows knit, as his sensitive ear was pained by the awful solecisms of the Cockney French.

It evidently troubled him, for, a few moments afterwards he took a pencil and the back of an envelope from his pocket and employed them furtively under the table. He seemed to think and write with great intentness for a minute or two. A smile of contentment lit up his features as he surveyed the result. Things went on quietly till he became absorbed in another item on the programme, when in turning round he swept the scrap of paper from the table to the floor. I kept my eye upon it all the evening, and, when

the Royal party left, I stole it. It bore these words :—

“ Deux beaux yeux pochès !
Me v’la epate
Je n’ai que dit :
‘ T’as tort, mon petit ’
Deux beaux yeux pochès ! ”

His brother, our present King, has also a happy knack of making others feel happy and contented when in his presence, whether social or official. I remember when as Prince of Wales he came to Drury Lane one night, and Mr. Collins enquired if he liked the pantomime, the reply was, “ Yes, but the Princess has a headache.” “ Oh,” said the manager, “ I will send down to Mr. Glover to moderate his brass and drums.” “ No—no—no,” was the quick genial reply, “ I wouldn’t annoy Mr. Glover for the world.” “ Oh, he won’t be annoyed,” said the manager. This charming thought has governed everything the popular Monarch has done.

Another experience at the Trocadero with Coborn, was when he sang “ The Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo.” The audience simply would not have the song at any price. They hooted, howled, and hissed till one night Coborn made a speech somewhat in this strain :

“ Ladies and gentlemen, I am engaged here for twelve weeks. It is my living. I am bound by contract. Now for twelve weeks I am going to sing this song every night and repeat the chorus till you join in with me. The sooner you learn it, and sing it with me—then will I leave the stage; but not before.”

And London, in three months, reeked of “ The Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo.”

It was at the Trocadero that Eugene Stratton, who married a daughter of “ Pony ” Moore, of Moore and Burgess’ minstrels, first trod the English music-halls, when he left the St. James Hall and Burnt-cork land; it was the old story, with a black

face they knew him and loved him, yet when he sang "The Whistling Coon" with a white face, well, as the American Lady says, "there were chilblains in the box-office." Frost, large and deep, attended poor Eugene—so back he had to go to popularity, fame and fortune—with the burnt-cork make-up.

This reminds me of Aynsley Cook the great Carl Rosa buffo-vocalist and the late Mr. Sankey of Moody and Sankey, and once famous Evangelists. Many people are not aware that at least one of these Evangelists was a vocalist in a minstrel entertainment in America many years before they came to England on their religious mission. They came to Liverpool on their great campaign, and at a time when Aynsley Cook, as the Baron in "The Babes of the Wood," was singing a topical song called "It's a fraud."

Cook—I certainly think unwisely—brought in the Moody and Sankey movement, ending with the gag-words "It's a fraud." This brought on an acrimonious newspaper warfare, and Aynsley Cook's disclosures in self-defence of the burnt-cork attributes of the popular Evangelist.

Perhaps one of the most daring efforts of impromptu minstrelsy was when the late Arthur Lloyd sang before the late King (then Prince of Wales), when H.R.H. was in the chair at a smoking concert of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society :

"I must now award a word of praise to a guest who's sitting there.

I mean that worthy party who so ably fills the Chair.
See how sweetly now he smiles, as pleasant as
can be ;

It's a sort of smile I read about but very seldom
see."

This sort of impromptu versification was once very popular. The singer came on, demanded a subject or word from the audience, and immediately improvised a verse as suggested above. "Give me a word, ladies and gentlemen," said the great Disraelian propagandist, Charles Williams, a one-

time famous motto-vocalist, one night at the Paragon in the Mile End Road. "Metempsychosis," shouted a voice from the rear of the hall, said to be the late dramatist, Henry Pettit. "Pardon me," replied the vocalist, "I never touch on religious matters."

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" made the fortunes of a Grand Theatre, Islington, pantomime. "Ballyhooley" and "Killaloe" did the same for Gaiety plays. "The Bogie Man" in "Carmen Up-to-date" at the same house drew London; and the late F. H. Celli gave success to "La Boulangère" at the Old Globe with Tosti's "For Ever and for Ever." As I have explained, Arthur Sullivan was very much chagrined when Teddy Solomon made his "Lost Chord" the counter-melody of a Guards' Burlesque hornpipe; so in like manner Ascherberg, the music-publisher, never forgave me a similar "truc" with the "Cavalleria" Intermezzo at Drury Lane. Thousands went to the old "Pav." to hear Bessie Bellwood sing "Alphonso the Fancy Man."

"Dorothy" first produced (a failure) at the Gaiety lacked a song for Hayden Coffin. In the absence in Australia of Alfred Cellier, the composer, those representing him here refused to allow any composition to be introduced but one of the original composer's. In this wise a song called "Old Dreams," published by the same publisher, was found, and, with new words by B. C. Stephenson, was introduced into the piece under the name of "Queen of my Heart."

There is a general impression that this song was first sung on the first night at the Gaiety. Such was not the case. The Press rated the management for leaving Coffin without a song, and the introduction was made as above stated, but the opera was a distinct failure, till it was bought over through the confidence of a musical accountant named H. J. Leslie, who took it to the Prince of Wales' Theatre and gave it nearly a new cast with Ben Davies and Marie Tempest to strengthen the work.

Conspicuous in another Gaiety play was "Linger

Longer, Lucy," the first success of a young composer, Sidney Jones. Sidney was first clarinet in his father's police band at Leeds, and obtained his introduction to the theatre through succeeding me in the musical direction of an itinerant "Fun on the Bristol" Company, from which post I had resigned over a difference in pitch with a coloured Prima Donna. His greater successes—"The Geisha" and "San Toy," not to mention many other favourites, all justified his early promise.

"Beer, Glorious Beer," one of the most insidious, vulgar, catchy tunes ever heard, was written by a stenographer named Stephen Leggatt, in Sir Augustus Harris' employ. The song made him; a realization of the sentiment finished him! The poor boy had a horrible facility for "knocking off" cheap specimens of this kind, and on our visits to the Continent, when he accompanied Sir Augustus, Collins and myself, it was as much as we could do to get him to do the letters. Harris had a specifically halting way of dictating, and often would say, when at a loss for a word, "Tir-a-la, tir-a-la, tir-a-la, tir-a-la," etc., etc. This poor stenographer's brain would then, like a famous lyrist we all know, wander off into "pantehnicon—pantehnicon—yes, yes—what rhymes with pantehnicon," and then his master would resume—the result being a conglomeration of Pitman's shorthand, his master's side-talk, and a couplet or two of a song his mind was just then working out. Poor boy! He deserved a better fate.

Before concluding this chapter I will recount one more humorous reference to the Trocadero as a music-hall; Bignell, who ran the old dancing casino, never did much with it. Later on, Mr. Sam Adams tried it, and Mr. Albert Chevalier with H. J. Didcott, a famous agent, had a "flutter," which ended in nothing. Sam Adams had a policy of deadheads—to run the bars with, which in one instance gave rise to a very funny incident. He used to issue thousands of free seats and stamp them all with an india-rubber stamp, "NOT ADMITTED AFTER SEVEN." This ensured the

place being crowded by seven, and when the regular public arrived, they had either to "transfer" to, or purchase a higher place seat. Sam was in financial difficulties, and as a last parting shot engaged Paulus, the Parisian comique, then in his "En Revenant de la Revue" prime. But a kindly friend, Clement Scott, was induced to do Paulus' *début* for the "Daily Telegraph," in those days a wonderful feat—a real live dramatic critic to go to a low music-hall, and the next morning there appeared a column of praise for the importation of "the atmosphere of the Boulevards to Piccadilly." All London rushed to book seats, and during the day cash, cheques, and postal orders galore weighed down Sam Adams' table. How well I remember his delight on his sudden accession to wealth. Now Sam had a large overdraft on his bank and the manager was holding on in expectation of this engagement getting him out of Sam's clutches; so the music-hall proprietor promised to "pay in" at once. Some hundreds of pounds therefore were sent down before four o'clock, when Sam's representative came back and threw the entire deposit on the office *éscritoire*.

"For God's sake!" cried Adams, "what's the matter? What's wrong? Are they *all* stumers (*i.e.* worthless)?"

"No," said the clerk, "but look at what you've stamped them."

Adams rushed to the bundle of crumpled briefs and there it was; in the hurry of keeping his word to the Bank manager he had used the wrong rubber stamp. Nearly every cheque bore this simple, but useless legend:

"NOT ADMITTED AFTER SEVEN."

CHAPTER XII

A National Opera-house—No Permanent Orchestras in London—In 1888—Bricks and Mortar—Mapleson's Police Station National Opera-house—How to really secure a National Academy of Music—Augustus Harris' Project—How to collect a Permanent Nucleus—Mapleson's Discoveries—Opera Schemes and Schools of Music—Sir Joseph Barnby—Operatic Fortunes—How Good Opera pays—Carl Rosa's Discoveries.

FERDINAND GLOVER, baritone in the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company, my uncle, died in 1859. In his papers I find a newspaper reference in an Irish Journal: "Is there a future for English opera?" On Saturday, April 29th, 1911, fifty-two years later, I find Mr. Charles Manners asking the same question in the "Morning Post." I have elsewhere in this volume dealt casually with the various points as to opera, merely making the references personal. It is a wide subject, but the whole scheme must be taken as to music generally, and there is no reason why the same successful results should not ensue for English opera as a dramatic fabric as have resulted from English music as an orchestral education. My personal experiences extend from the August Manns period in the 'Sixties, through all the history of these interesting developments down to the knighthood of Henry J. Wood, and the Guildhall principalship of Landon Ronald and his New Symphony Band successes. Given the musical groundwork with which to experiment, anything is possible. Henry Wood

conducted musical comedy for Miss May Yohè (in "The Lady Slavey") at the Avenue; Landon Ronald had a like experience ("L'Amour Mouillé") at the Lyric; Charles Manners was in the chorus of Solomon's "Claude Duval" at the Olympic, and afterwards sang the Sentry Song in "Iolanthe" at the Savoy; and Walter Hyde went from the frivolities of "Miss Hook of Holland," a trivial musical song and dance olla podrida, to a triumphant Siegmund in "The Valkyrie," by Richard Wagner, at Covent Garden. I have made so few quotations in these memoirs that the following may be easily pardoned. Listen to what Colonel J. H. Mapleson, the elder, writes about English orchestras in 1888 :—

"While on the subject of American orchestras, I may add that their excellence is scarcely suspected by English amateurs. In England we have certainly an abundance of good orchestral players, but we have not so many musical centres; and, above all, *we have not in London, what New York has long possessed, a permanent orchestra of high merit under a first-rate conductor.* Our orchestras in London are nearly always 'scratch' affairs. The players are brought together anyhow, and not one of our concert societies give more than eight concerts in the course of the year. Being paid so much a performance, our piece-work musicians make a great fuss about attending rehearsals; they are always ready, if they can make a few shillings' profit by it, to have themselves replaced by substitutes.

"All really good orchestras must from the nature of the case be permanent ones, composed of players in receipt of regular salaries. Attendance at rehearsals is then taken as a matter of course, and no question of replacement by substitutes can then be raised. The only English orchestra in which the conditions essential to a perfect *ensemble* are to be found is the Manchester orchestra (Note: mostly foreigners at this time), conducted by Sir Charles Hallé."

Fancy! "We had not in London" a permanent orchestra of high merit under a first-rate conductor—all "scratch" affairs—only eight concerts in the course of a year! But sufficient for the simile. Review the altered conditions here in 1912. Every concert-hall and music-hall on Sundays, or any possible building now has either its "permanent orchestra," or regular season. Conductors shower upon us, musicians even invest their own money to form their personal combinations; in the old days the conductor engaged the musicians, now it is different—the men engage the man. "Richter, unless you conduct well, we won't have you next season." Fancy this position! But what I insist is that exactly that which has been done in orchestral music can be done in opera. It is all nonsense to say the material "*n'existe pas*." It is there, and plenty of it, and it would be much more evident if the possible Tetrizzini, Caruso, or Melba knew exactly that they could command a market. I first wrote all this on the eve of the opening of Hammerstein's Opera-house. I knew that Mr. Hammerstein would be careful! If, in the language of his own countrymen, he could "deliver the goods,"—well and good. Bricks and mortar were easy to buy. You can go into any wholesale builder's in London any day and order ten thousand bricks, but one Caruso to sing in them when they are put together is another affair. Did Mapleson and, in his one Grand Opera venture, D'Oyly Carte start at the wrong end? "What are you building this Royal Opera-house for?" said Sir Augustus Harris to D'Oyly Carte one evening. Harris really was jealous. "One of these days, Carte, I will turn it into a music-hall for you." There are plenty of "bricks and mortar" institutions ready; it seems superfluous to encumber the land with them till you have got the talent.

Now let us see what Mapleson did. Here is his programme for "The Grand National Opera-house, Scotland Yard," for few people know that the present New Scotland Yard was the site—half built

—of Mapleson's white elephant. This was December 16th, 1875 :—

CEREMONY OF LAYING THE FIRST STONE

OF THE

GRAND NATIONAL OPERA-HOUSE

VICTORIA EMBANKMENT

Holders of Cards of Invitation will not be admitted
after 1.15

“The bands of the Coldstream Guards and Honourable Artillery Company will be in attendance, and a Guard of Honour will line the entrance.

“His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and Suite will arrive at the Victoria Embankment at half-past one o'clock.

“His Royal Highness will be received by Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., Sir James Hogg, Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Mr. F. H. Fowler, the Architect, and Mr. J. H. Mapleson, the Director of the National Opera.

“On arrival at the platform, an address will be read to the Duke of Edinburgh in the name of the founders of the Grand National Opera-house.

“His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh will then proceed to lay the first stone.

“The trowel will be handed to His Royal Highness by Mr. Mapleson, the Director; the plumb-rule and level by Mr. F. H. Fowler, the Architect; and the Mallet by Mr. W. Webster, the Builder.

“On the completion of the ceremony, His Royal Highness will make a brief reply to the address.

“The Duke of Edinburgh will then be conducted to his carriage at the entrance, by which His Royal

Highness arrived, and will drive to St. Stephen's Club.

“ St. Stephen's Club,
“ 16th December, 1875.”

The following address was then read by Sir James McGarel Hogg :—

“ Your Royal Highness, On behalf of the founders of the Grand National Opera-house, I have the honour to present to your Royal Highness the following address in which the objects of the undertaking are set forth :—

“ The establishment of a National Opera-house in London has long been contemplated, the obstacle to which, however, was the impossibility of finding a suitable site; and it was not until that vast undertaking was carried out by the Metropolitan Board of Works, which has resulted in reclaiming from the Thames large tracts of land, and in throwing open the great thoroughfare of the Victoria Embankment, that a site sufficient to meet the requirements of a National Opera-house could be obtained; and it is this building that your Royal Highness is graciously pleased to inaugurate to-day.

“ The National Opera-house is to be devoted firstly to the representation of Italian Opera, which will be confined as heretofore to the spring and summer months; and secondly, to the production of the works of English composers, represented by English performers, both vocal and instrumental.

“ It is intended, as far as possible, to connect the Grand National Opera-house with the Royal Academy of Music, the National Training School for Music, and other kindred institutions in the United Kingdom, by affording to duly-qualified students a field for the exercise of their profession in all its branches.

“ The privilege, which it is the intention of the Director to grant to the most promising of these students, of being allowed to hear the works of the

greatest masters performed by the most celebrated artistes, will, in itself, form an invaluable accessory to their general training.

"Instead of being compelled to seek abroad further instruction when their prescribed course at the various establishments is finished, they will thus be able to obtain this at home, and more quickly and efficiently profit by example.

"In Paris, when sufficiently advanced, the students can make a short step from the Conservatoire to the Grand Opera; so it is hoped that English students will use the legitimate means now offered and afforded for the first time in this country of perfecting their general training, whether as singers, instrumentalists, or composers, according to their just claims.

"In conclusion, I beg leave to invite your Royal Highness to proceed with the ceremony of laying the first stone of the New Grand National Opera-house.

"Grand National Opera-house,

"Victoria Embankment,

"16th December, 1875."

Mapleson intended this to be the leading Opera-house of the world. The building was entirely isolated; a station had been built beneath the house in connection with the District Railway, so that the audience on leaving had merely to descend the stairs and enter the train. Dressing-rooms, containing lockers, were provided for suburban visitors who might wish to attend the opera. Subterranean passages, moreover, led into the Houses of Parliament, and arrangements made by which silent members, after listening to beautiful music instead of dull debates, might return to the House on hearing the division-bell. He was sanguine enough to think the Parliamentary support thus secured would alone have given an ample source of revenue.

He had arranged with the Lyric Club, which ultimately settled down in Coventry Street, to lease one corner; the Royal Academy of Music, who are only going into their new building this year, agreed to take another. The contemplated buildings

included a new concert-room, together with a large gallery for pictures not accepted by the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy, to be called "The Rejected Gallery." Shades of Drury Lane! "Rejected addresses."

There were recreation-rooms, too, for the principal artistes, including billiard-tables, etc., besides two very large Turkish baths, which, it was hoped, would be of service to the manager in cases of sore throat and sudden indisposition generally. Such was the fantastic idea, even so far as appointing two throat doctors, Dr. (afterwards "Sir") Morell Mackenzie and Mr. Lennox Browne.

Sir John Humphreys had arranged for the purchase of a small steamer to act as tug to a large house-boat, which would, from time to time, take the members of the Company down the river for rehearsals or recreation. The steamer was being built by Thornycrofts. The house-boat was of unusually large dimensions, and contained a magnificent concert-room.

The nautical arrangements had been confided to Admiral Sir George Middleton, a member of the acting committee; or, in his absence, to Lord Alfred Paget.

When about £103,000 had been laid out on the building, another £10,000 was wanted for the roofing; after which a sum of £50,000, as already arranged, could have been attained on mortgage. For want of £10,000, however, the building had to remain roofless. For backing or laying against a horse, for starting a new sporting club, or a new music-hall, the money could have been found in a few hours. But for such an enterprise as the National Opera-house it was impossible to obtain it; and, after a time, in the interest of the stockholders (for there was a ground rent to pay of £3000) Mapleson consented to a sale.

The purchasers were Messrs. Quilter, Morris and Tod Heatly, to whom the building was made over, as it stood, for £29,000.

Later on, it was resold for £500; and the new buyers had to pay no less than £3000 in order to

get the walls pulled down and broken up into building materials.

The site of what, with a little public spirit usefully applied, would have been the finest theatre in the world, has now to serve for a new police-station. With such solid foundations, the cells, if not comfortable, will at least be dry. It is stated that the underground rooms in the original scheme, which were to do duty for future Melbas, Tetrazzinis and Carusos, are now the receptacles of the "elect" of the Metropolitan Police Department at Scotland Yard.

MORAL.

December, 1875—Mapleson tries to build an opera-house. (Turned into a police-station.)

December, 1890—D'Oyly Carte builds an opera-house. (Turned into a music-hall.)

December, 1911—Hammerstein builds an opera-house. (Result—Just now in the balance.)

October, 1912—Hammerstein opera-house is for sale.

Now, Mr. Carte, in his light opera scheme, really laid himself out to do the right thing. He first got his operas, his artistes, and his "material" together, and then—but not till then—did he build his Savoy. Following the success of "H.M.S. Pinafore," he personally secured Gilbert and Sullivan and the entire *personnel* of his scheme before he bought a brick. He only failed in Shaftesbury Avenue because he applied light opera methods to grand opera requirements. Had he gone on his Savoy business model and stuck to general operas instead of only one, "Ivanhoe," what a different result there might have been. I do not know exactly what the Royal English Opera cost, but Mapleson says that he spent £103,000, and Carte must have spent £125,000; so let us make a small arithmetical calculation—

	£
Colonel Mapleson	103,000
Mr. D'Oyly Carte	125,000
Mr. Thos. Beecham (by his own admission)	70,000
	£298,000

That is over a quarter of a million of money, and "nothing doing." Mr. Thomas Beecham—I first remember him as conductor of a modest provincial opera company—of course, did not indulge in the "bricks and mortar" idea; he decided, somewhat haphazardly, one must admit, to start, and then to look round for his artistes. Then of course he discovered that all the remunerative copyrights belonged to the Covent Garden Syndicate—legacies of the Augustus Harris Estate which, on his death, with the accompanying scenery, the older house bought for about £12,000.

What a wise policy on the part of this operatic musical Machiavelli of the Victorian Era. He first of all "corners" all the operas; he then similarly garners in the artistes, and when in possession of both—well, he takes the opera-houses. These points of view of mine are not new. I have expounded them before in public, but not in such detail. I originally had a scheme to divert all the young operatic talent of our musical academies to Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Augustus Harris accepted it, and with the kind assistance of Sir Joseph Barnby and Mr. Hilton Carter—to be referred to later—we tried to enlist the Guildhall School pupils into the scheme; but—this was nineteen years ago—prejudices were too strong, and our missionary efforts only ended in taking over thirty fresh voices from the Savoy, and throwing them on to "learn the operas." There is no knowing but that all this might have gone further if it were not for Harris' too early death.

Before leaving this portion of the opera subject I must mention a rather smart move which Harris made to build up a "permanent" opera troupe.

One of his pet schemes was, what I called a "when opera" contract, and this really was a wonderful document. When an operatic artiste came to Harris and asked for an engagement—if the artiste were at all decent, he offered them a "when opera" contract—that is, an engagement at so much a week for three years, only to operate when Sir Augustus Harris performed the opera—no

matter in what language. Now, this contract only practically bound Harris to fourteen weeks a year—the grand opera season—and yet the very moment he advertised or announced “opera,” *prime donne*, *contralti*, baritones, *bassi*, and chorus, fully equipped with a repertoire, all had to come from any part of the world to London. Some of the artistes who booked under this contract were Joseph O’Mara, David Bispham, Madame Olitzka, the Sisters Ravogli, Phillip Brozel, Charles Manners, Fanny Moody, Richard Green and numerous others. So that this position arose: if Lago, Mapleson or other *impresario* announced a season of opera at any London theatre—the very next morning would appear in all the Press, “Sir Augustus Harris announces a short season of grand opera. Full particulars shortly.” And then off went the cables all over the world to those who had signed these contracts, and a ready-made opera company was at hand in a few days. Lago, however, first brought over “*Cavalleria Rusticana* ;” but it found its haven very quickly at Covent Garden, as did both the Sisters Ravogli—discovered by Lago in like manner.

Carl Rosa worked somewhat on a similar plan, and the long procession of “stars” that he discovered, and the eminent reputation and fortune that he left, is a sure testimony to the undoubted soundness of his policy. But he left “bricks and mortar” alone. Because there is no market for the opera stage, there is no output. Because there is no output required, there is no manufactory. The operatic classes at our schools of music cannot be taken seriously. They are a species of huge “Follies” entertainment with none of the “Follies” humour. If the market were existent, it might be worth while considering the point, and the young student, too, might think it worth while to study for a branch of his art which he now knows only as a useless proposition. The drama in this country, musical comedy, and comic opera, flourishes simply because it is done according to Cocker. Grand opera flourishes because it is subsidized and thus

rendered independent of haphazard patronage. There remains our "National Opera," be it "opera in English," or the national product. Mark you! Mapleson in his "Memoirs" really admits twenty years insolvency. His book is full of sheriffs bailiffs, writs, and injunctions. And yet he boasts of discoveries and the first introduction to England of fifty-one *prime donne* and *contralti*—Pattis and Nilssons, Trebellis and Sinicos; fourteen tenors, from Mongini to Capoul and Fancelli; sixteen baritones, from Jean de Reszkè (first heard here as a baritone) to Santley and Del Puente; ten *bassi* and dozens of Marios, Viardots, Giuglinis, Titiens, etc. He boasts of twenty-three "first productions," of which "Faust" (Gounod), "Carmen" (Bizet), and "The Ring" (Wagner) are not the least famous, and this without a banking balance; and yet in spite of this we are asked to accept the hypothesis that because Mapleson found them, or revived them, they all died with the old Colonel. Since the death of Augustus Harris, however, the man has not come along. The public have always shown their anxiety to pay to hear good things—if they get the chance. Arrange to let them have this opportunity, and there will be no need for croakers. Carl Rosa, Augustus Harris, and J. Henry Mapleson did not croak from the housetops. They "did" something—gave the country something and achieved something.

It certainly seems a pity that no better result can be obtained, for I do think that more ink has been spilled over "National Opera" schemes, schools of music, and "academy" talk than would float a Dreadnought, but as I have already mentioned and suggested, the beginning has always been at the wrong end. Just a few words more about how Augustus Harris tried to adopt the pet scheme of mine for embodying operatic experience—not instruction—in the curriculum of the various schools of music, to which I have referred. It was a natural sequence to his "when opera" ideas. If a man wants his boy to be an architect, a watchmaker, or adopt any other profession or trade, he articles or apprentices him to that calling. He is thrown

among the professional experts, and in time he becomes imbued with the necessary spirit; the good in him—the genius in him, if any, comes out, and he makes his way. Nobody deplores the dearth of engineers, architects, or good handicraftsmen; but periodical howlings arise over the absence of good vocalists and good artistes, and yet nobody ever moves a finger to get at the right pulse. Harris, if he liked, might have done this in 1895. I went round to all the colleges with my propaganda already mentioned, and found little encouragement. The only hope was, as I have said earlier in this chapter, at the Guildhall School of Music.

Sir Joseph Barnby tried his hardest to promote our scheme—that all the vocal pupils should be apprenticed or attached to Drury Lane and Covent Garden for three years at a small graduating payment. They would, of course, have to join the chorus. They would have to be schooled in elocution, musical diction, and any régimal attributes necessary to operatic training. When an understudy was wanted, they would be given—according to ability and voice, of course—an opportunity of making a quiet, unostentatious *début*, and if successful and encouraging, the rest was easy. The scheme is not new in the drama or lighter music school; it has always served, but it had never been tried seriously in opera on business lines. It had never been placed on a practical footing. When one now joins the operatic class of any of our music academies, it simply means a mere payment of fees, a few courses of elementary training from professors, who know little of what they profess to teach—I mean in stage musical training—and one annual performance in a dull theatre on a dull afternoon to a sympathetic—but for critical purposes, a useless—audience of parents and their friends, and the whole thing is over. The Covent Garden idea even went further. There was to be an entire repertoire of one week's operas, like "Faust," "Romeo and Juliet," "Cavalleria" and others. These, for chorus purposes, were to be immediately put in hand, and as the suitable "Fausts," "Romeos," "Turridus" or

"Santuzzas," were discovered and got ready, then they were to be given a chance with a view to future presentation. The scheme was Utopian I admit, in serious opera, and it had great possibilities. But again, in the terse and epigrammatic language of the United States, there was "nothin' doin'." To emphasize the veracity of this point, I print the decisive ultimatum from Sir Joseph Barnby and Mr. Hilton Carter, the then Secretary of the Guildhall School of Music, and now the popular manager of the Albert Hall. The idea received every help, hope and honest encouragement from these gentlemen; but to no purpose, and Hilton Carter on March 28th, 1895, wired me:—

"No one accepts terms. Barnby and self have done our best.—HILTON CARTER."

In the face of such a blow what was the use of trying to do anything? Two theories presented themselves to the *impresario*:—

(1) Were our music schools only to be hot-houses for the production of *dilettante* amateurs whose musical education was to be merely a stepping-stone to after-dinner torture in suburban drawing-rooms? Or

(2) Were they to be useful educational centres for the encouragement of possible John McCormacks or genuine aspirants who really desired a genuine professional training?

That we had no proper educational curriculum for such a desirable end was evident. Two instances, already mentioned, not taking a too serious view of the art, will suffice.

HAYDEN COFFIN was cast, in 1895, for the part of "Captain John Smith" in "Pocahontas" at the Empire by Edward Solomon and Sydney Grundy. The prejudice against him, because he had no operatic training or schooling, was so great, that the part was wrenched from him at the eleventh

hour, and an old hand, F. H. Celli, brought in. Ten weeks later the financier, Mr. H. Osborne O'Hagan, a gentleman whose musical knowledge is zeroesque, insisted that Coffin sang in "The Lady of the Locket." Result—a sensational success.

And all have heard how WALTER HYDE was taken from "Miss Hook of Holland," to Siegmund in "Valkyrie" at Covent Garden.

Both these artistes owe their introduction to their only possible artistic *métier* through illegitimate channels. Another instance—a lady who has since been favourably received as "Isolde" at Covent Garden, was interviewed by my friend Mr. Sydney Elliston at the Prince of Wales' and politely told "Everything was full, except for chorus." This lady had spent thousands of pounds on her musical education. Then again Madame Tetrzzini was offered to the Covent Garden management for the Grand Opera Season times out of number, and only allowed to creep in by the back door of an autumn campaign—because she was the sister-in-law of Campanini, the conductor. This great artiste had been well-known for many years on the Continent and in the opera-houses of South-America, but for some reason or other she never could get a hearing in England. The management having theatre, copyrights, costumes and scenery on hand, do an autumn season, mark this, without practically any "subvention"—or at best with only a subscription, immeasurably smaller in bulk and society than the regular May to August campaign. What is the result? The supposed non-appreciative British public all rush, pack and besiege Covent Garden during a period when they cannot be said to pay only to see coronets, tiaras and all the panoply of over-dressed society; what for to hear—an artiste—because the Press have proclaimed her as one of the finest in her line. Was Covent Garden merely a peeress's promenade in this season? Certainly not!

I could multiply these instances innumeraably, but a few will suffice. These little growls are not meant

in any unkind spirit, but the same business methods that apply in the much belittled musical comedy could be applied to Grand Opera—or National Opera—with advantage. I well remember Fanny Moody (who was not allowed to be a star at Covent Garden) singing at a rehearsal on that stage for a performance of “Pagliacci” at Windsor. Mancinelli passed by, remarking to me, “*Tiens, tiens, est ce qu’il-y-a des chanteuses comme ça à Londres?*”

Writing on the eve of another opera-house opening in London, I was sorry to think that it was going to follow the fate of similar enterprises started in opposition to Covent Garden and end in failure. The supply of material from a national point of view should be considered. We don’t want bricks. We want uvulas.

It is all bunkum to tell me that English—or shall we call it National?—opera won’t pay. Carl Rosa left £78,000, and Mapleson and Gye admit in their records having made £24,000 at Covent Garden in one year—1879. Augustus Harris left about £100,000—although how much of it was opera gain one knows not. Mr. Charles Manners tells us that he has made his “pile” and retires, and yet there are the croakers who will go about and shout against the musical taste of the public in this direction. My theories about these matters may not meet with general acceptance, but it is not fair to have the musical taste slandered merely because it might be wrongly catered for.

A friend of mine came on hard times once, and being a journalist in early life he returned to that profession to earn his livelihood, and to keep himself *au fait* with the times he purchased many weekly papers. It was during the old china craze, and he noticed the tiresome iteration with which so-called specialists averred that “this is very rare,” “that is the only specimen of so-and-so in existence,” “there is only one other of these plates known—now in the possession of a curio-dealer in Boston,” and so on. “Hello!” said he, “everybody says things don’t exist, but nobody goes into the

highways and byways and looks for them." This he decided to do, with the assistance of his wife, and with what result? The "solitary one extant" was duplicated dozens of times; the "only twelve plates on record of this" easily ran into dozens, and finding his market easily he was able to make a small fortune. In one case he "had" a relation beautifully. This collector boasted of his "rare collection of —s. This only one extant!" My friend easily bought thirty-six more pieces for £12, and sold twelve of them to his relation for £120.

So it is musically. Everybody cries, "There are no *prime donne*, there are no baritones, there are no tenors"; possibly not—walking up and down the Strand with labels on their backs. But nobody goes out and looks for them. It is the same in a small way with harpists. There has always been a suggestion that harpists are scarce, and the best position in London in this line is held by a foreigner. But when I wanted twelve harpists quite recently everybody said, "You can't get them—they don't exist," etc.; but when it was publicly known that I did want them, I had one hundred and twenty-eight applications, and one hundred of them could read well at sight.

When "Hansel and Gretel" was once put on at Covent Garden, with Jessie Huddleston and David Bispham, many of the subscribers protested. Not "good enough for the grand season, don't you know," but the *impresario* stuck to his guns. As long as you cater for an exclusive *clientèle*, you must put up with this sort of snobbishness.

But the whole idea wants careful and business-like application. When Mr. Manners was at Drury Lane many of the opera subscribers sent their cheques for half-guinea stalls. When they found that the stalls were only six shillings, they demanded their money back, as "six-shilling opera did not appeal to them." The *clientèle* at Covent Garden meant a subsidy of £800 a night; the outside public, an average £300—*i.e.* £1100. But E. C. Hedmond, an unknown tenor, was able to open at Covent Garden in October (not the grand season)

with a performance of "Tannhauser," which drew £328. Therefore, fashion guaranteed for fashion's sake £800, and art for art's sake drew with Hermondt's English crowd just as much in October as it did in "the grand seasons." I have proved by published figures at Drury Lane in Harris' time that £1500 a week can be taken at the doors for English opera—done spasmodically. What is there to be gained when the idea is continuously run on a business basis? Ask Carl Rosa—£78,000.

So generally it all resolves itself into this, that the average aspirant for operatic honours may have the requisite voice material, but not the necessary wherewithal for a Continental education. A properly devised scheme of a real operatic school of music in London, with the very best that could be engaged of English and Continental maestri as tutors, would open up an encouragement of enormous value to the community. It would be accessible to all and sundry at a moderate cost. A consummation to be devoutly desired is the amalgamation of several of the existing schools of music which are cutting each other's throats and all the year carrying on an internecine jealous war. I should devote one of them exclusively to the consideration of opera in English, its study, its orchestral requirements, its choral department, its methods and its elocution. To hear an English tenor speak lines in a native opera "tickles me to death." Here he would have the same tuition as I have often seen given to the lyric artistes on the stage of the Grand Opera, Paris, by its director, Gailhard, but which one from past experience knows is never vouchsafed in London. Till this is done, a National English Opera is as far off as the millennium.

Carl Rosa, as I have said, left £78,000, and out of what? Julia Gaylord, Georgina Burns, Leslie Crotty (a clerk in a Dublin bank in Abbey Street, singing on Sundays at Whitefriars Street for my master, Signor Cellini, and at evening concerts for my mother), Ludwig (son of Ledwidge, second tenor and music-copier in my grandfather's choir), Rose Hersee, Blanche Cole, Fred Packard, Joseph Maas,

Charles Stanley, Ben Davies—only to mention a few names. But Rosa never built opera-houses; he hired other people's mansions; but every one knew there was a market with Rosa, and talent was not slow to come along.

CHAPTER XIII

People I have met—"The Follies"—Their origin, success, big Manchester Coup—"Slang"—Some specimens—Catch phrases—Criminal stories—The Gattis again—London Police Courts—Mr. "Too-cleverly"—George Grossmith as a Bow Street shorthand writer—Holloway jail experiences—Barney Barnato—Arthur Sturges and Lord Mersey.

THERE exists only one "Follies." It means everything in up-to-date, good-natured humour. It is to English drama what the real art of caricature is to the French stage—the "charge" to the serious newspaper, the "blague" to the topic of the day. Many stories are told of the genesis. Few are true. "Niggers on the beach," "perambulating Pierrots," "Buskers"—all are ventured as a true explanation, but none are correct. Let me just say here that beyond "Uncle Bones"—the original Christy Minstrel at Margate—and one or two "buskers," nothing seems to have been done to elevate the open-air entertainment till late in the 'Eighties, when four members of R. D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company on tour, finding themselves faced with an eight weeks' vacation, entered the business as "The Mysterious Masked Musicians." From this starting-point are sprung the hundreds of troupes which from time to time appear on our seaside coast—some good, some bad, some indifferent, but "all right in the summer time."

It was in 1895 that a Mr. Sherrington Chinn, recently deceased, started at Worthing a pierrot troupe called "The Follies," and some time after Harry Gabriel Pelissier purchased the title and all interest from the originator.

But then it was only a pierrot troupe, and one of its members was Mr. Arthur Wimperis, who wrote the lyrics for "The Arcadians." Now this entertainment is our only London caricature, the true embodiment of everything that travesty ought to be. The male members are the most voiceless collection of vocalists I ever heard, but goodness me, all their quartettes and concert pieces are better sung than the attempts of some real operatic artistes.

Gwennie Mars told me I would not listen to her for the chorus at Drury Lane, but her thumb-nail sketches of Harry Lauder and Wilkie Bard were genius studies, and yet where does it all come from, this realization of the real thing out of the supposed nothing? Why, Pelissier himself.

When the "Follies" first came under my notice it was at Bexhill. I gave them £35 for four performances. I noticed their talent; the extreme individuality of their new and original versions of worn-out "trucs"; I saw their originality, and I was sure that of all the "pierrotteers" they were beginning where all the others left off.

I was deputed to book the dates for the Midland Theatre, Manchester, by Mr. W. Towle. I undertook this task for six months, but the real season was for Christmas time. Towle wanted something good, so I had to think out a scheme, as I would be then engaged at Drury Lane, and therefore could not give the campaign serious attention—personally—so I sought out Pelissier, and asked him what he was doing. He informed me that he had taken the Queen's Hall for his annual Christmas season of one month, where the receipts were not encouraging, but, as he remarked, "the London notices were useful." I lured him to abandon the Queen's Hall idea; he reluctantly consented, and accepted an engagement at Manchester for me for four weeks at sixty-five per cent. of the gross receipts per week. I then started a plan of campaign in advertising him—suggested and partly wrote and made up a "Follies" brochure, with which we flooded Manchester. At the time I thought that I had a malignant growth in my throat, and did all the

business in a half-hearted way, so I turned all the real preliminary work over to Pelissier himself.

"The Follies," after they signed my contract, appeared at the Tivoli in October, and made a distinct success. To me then came Pelissier. He funked the Manchester engagement, begged to be let off. I declined; pointed out to him the great possibilities of a new Corny Grain-German Reed business, but as an encouragement guaranteed him that at sixty-five per cent. his receipts for any one week would not be less than eighty-five pounds. This seemed to satisfy him, but no sooner did I settle Pelissier than I found I had to deal with Mr. Towle of the Midland, who wired me as follows :—

"Follies at Tivoli—a music-hall—not quite the thing for us—please cancel."

"TOWLE"

I wasn't going to drop Pelissier, and be so easily bowled over in this way, so I wired Towle after this fashion :—

"Nonsense, I am your agent and the principal is responsible for the agent. They appear in December for Queen Alexandra's Birthday Party at Sandringham, that's good enough for your public."

"GLOVER"

Of course, this was a Parthian shot, for the Sandringham engagement was a bolt from the blue. It came on us all like a flash, and any doubt that might have existed in my mind was settled at once. To Manchester for the "Follies" I was firm.

"The Follies" opened in Manchester on December 22nd, and I had arranged with Towle to pack the house with paper—including the Lord Mayor. On the night of December 22nd I received the following telegram :—

"Glover, Drury Lane Theatre, London."

"Show never went better, full house including Mayor, receipts over twelve pounds, advance booking strong. Merry Christmas."

"HARRY"

But the "twelve" went into hundreds, and so a great humour was preserved to us. At the end of the first week Towle sent for me. "Look here," he says, "your commission is £63. Do you know I can get a chef for £3 a week?"

"Yes, but a *chef d'orchestre* costs sixty-three!"

Of course, I knew my Manchester well—I also had seen "Bill Bailey," Pelissier's pantomime skit, at the Palace, and knew how home it would get to the ordinary provincial pantomime—as it was done in Manchester.

I did not see "Bill Bailey" on its first night at the Palace, when it was tried, but one who was there writes:—

"Anything more depressing than the circumstances of the first performance can hardly be imagined. One of the thickest fogs I can recall pervaded the auditorium. The house was not half full. Across the footlights the Company could see great gaps in the stalls. Those who had managed to get to the theatre were by no means in the best of spirits, but before the Follies had been on the stage five minutes the attenuated audience, from the stalls to gallery, was roaring with laughter, which never ceased until after the curtain had fallen on the last scene. Probably no one there that night had realized the scope for burlesque provided by the slavishly conventional characteristics of the ordinary Christmas pantomime. The delightfully subtle treatment of the subject of speech, song, dance, and 'business,' the quick changes of costume, the grotesque scenery, and, not least, the spirit of burlesque conveyed by the music, appealed to the audience in a remarkable degree."

Pelissier manages to keep his company together by absolute force of good-will, good humour, and good temper. No more happy family exists, no more generous host, kind friend, and good fellow lives. I am told that it is quite a common thing to see this notice on the Call Board:—

Apollo Theatre
Monday at 11 a.m. sharp
All concerned
PYJAMA DAY
H.G.P.

which means that "all concerned" are taken to Bond Street and presented with beautiful suits of silk pyjamas. Substitute "Motor Day" for motor trips, or "Diamond ring" day—but there let it rest.

One thing that I have noticed in my three decades of Bohemian life is the passing of "slang" as a vehicle of conversation between the members of the theatrical profession. "Slang"—the word used as a verb "to slang" in some of the best society—really means a "side show," and "slang" language was the vernacular used by the passing, or moving, showman in the fairs as they talked to each other from their various stands in much the same way as the Covent Garden porters converse, or the coster fraternity carry on their airy nothings in their own particular persiflage.

The travelling booth—and the travelling gipsy, to which one may add the old travelling mummer (sometimes called "Barn-stormer"), all drop into this "slang" familiarity, and so for many years even as the old-time mummer affected a certain paraded dignity in the stars' dressing-room, his insufficiently paid subordinate threw dignity to the winds and used his "own perticler" bombast in his wig-paste moments and puff and powder patchings.

When I first started touring this "*lingua franca*," as it is called in Italy, was freely patronized by the actor fraternity, and often gave me pause for much thought.

I remember when the word "boulder" first came into vogue, and it mystified me muchly, till one day I found that it would often be used as a term of endearment, and that set my mind at rest.

Augustus Moore, Dick Butler (the Editor of the "Referee"), and "another," were one day at the Gaiety bar. The "other" in anger appealed to Moore. "Look here," he said, "Butler calls me a little bounder—what is a bounder?" "I don't know," said Moore, "you're the only one I have ever seen."

But what irritated me more than anything else was the use of what is known as "rhyming slang." Rhyming slang consists in getting some phrase the last word of which rhymes with the exact word that you want to use, but to be adept, so soon as you know your phrase you decapitate it of the rhyming word and there you are. To ask for cheese by saying "Pass me the battle" sounds fairly silly, till you understand that "and breeze" is cut out. To ask for a piece of "strike me," the word "dead" rhyming with "bread," also wants taste, and when asking a friend to have some liquid refreshment to be told that he will have "A Polly and I'm so" is chaos supreme till you understand that the rhyming phrase is "I'm so frisky," though it certainly seems a roundabout way of asking for Apollinaris and whisky. To hear the old actors talk of "winging" it or "ponging" it, two phrases which meant taking the words of a part from the "wings"—the prompter's box—was also a curious experience.

Actors used in the old days to be very fond of using thieves' slang. A popular mummer's feast was "a Jimmy." No self-respecting syndicate of burglars ever think of "cracking a crib" unless there is a sheep's-head supper provided as a *hors d'œuvre* to the evening's labours. The sheep's head was nicknamed "a jemmy," an implement used in the trade of burglary, an offence which by law has to be committed between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. If it is done in any other period it is called something different, house-breaking or felony—but the Judge gets home all the time.

Personally, I always took a great deal of interest in the criminal classes, and threatening myself once with a barrister's degree, fell up against a good

deal of the real patois of the pick-pocket and jargon of the jailer's birds. All the London Police Courts have been more or less familiar to me—Marlborough Street and Bow Street in particular. At Bow Street I spent hours and days, ay, months, studying at first hand all the small petty life stories which occupy the Courts of first instance. I did verbatim reports of long cases (not professionally) for my friends in the fourth estate. Arising out of what was known as the Castioni case, I wrote a series of articles on Extradition Law.

I thought that a profession which has as its most ornamental high priests George Grossmith, the elder George Grossmith, the entertainer grandfather and father of the versatile George Grossmith—of the Gaiety—was good enough for me.

George Grossmith Senr. was succeeded at Bow Street by a Mr. Cleverley. A good chap he was, however, not inaptly described as Mr. "Too-cleverly," on an unfortunate occasion. It is a golden rule in English justice that the proceedings of the Magistrates' room are private, but when the summonses were issued against Sir Henry Isaacs and Mr. Horatio Bottomley over the notorious Hansard Union affair, Cleverley sent the intimation that summonses had been issued to the Press that evening, and Sir John Bridge sent him an intimation of his displeasure and intention to suspend him the next morning.

At this time my French was rather well in hand, so I went once to Holloway Gaol to take the depositions of six Swiss-French conspirators, who had been doing confidence trick-employment-agency business—this to oblige a solicitor friend to whom I owed many a debt of kindness. In this wise I became rather well known there, and my *bona fides* were not disputed. Later on a friend got incarcerated on a serious charge, and in order to see him alone, and not in the cage-like grille usually apportioned to "visitors" who go to see their friends, I adopted the solicitor's clerk subterfuge, with the same authority that I had used in the French case.

Under such circumstances you are ushered into a room with glass doors. The "*détenu*" is then brought to you with a huge number—like a cabman's badge—on his coat, and then you are left alone. I awaited my friend. He came. The humour of it appealed to him, and before the chief warder could close the door, he burst out: "You're a nice damned solicitor, you are." This the chief warder overheard and reported, and the next that I knew of this business was when an Inspector Jarvis came from Scotland Yard and suggested that I should be arrested for impersonating a solicitor. I had some difficulty in explaining matters, but it came out right in the end.

Another time I interested myself in the case of a friend—a journalist who wanted to interview a murderer for a Sunday paper. He devised the following trick to attain this end. He threw a brick through a plate glass window of a shop, was arrested over-night, brought up the same morning in the same series with the murderer, and elected to go to Holloway in default of paying the damage and fine, so that he might travel in the identical Black Maria. On arrival at Holloway, he having accomplished this—and interviewed the assassin through the grill in the door—his friends arrived, paid all the fees, and he was liberated full of joy, and copy. My friend once lived on the same line as myself; he asked me to allow him to introduce me to a lady sitting in the corner of the carriage, who he remarked, "is stopping with us for the week-end." He did so. "Mr. Glover—Mrs. P—etc.," and then in a side remark, "the famous child poisoner."

Once again I paid a visit to Holloway to see a poor actress who had attempted to commit suicide. She had been there a week, she told me, and the chaplain refused to see her because "she was on the stage." I gave that chaplain two columns the next morning in T. P. O'Connor's "*Sun*"—or Christian Charity—which did him more good than any missionary expedition has done the savages for many years.

When Dr. Jim arrived under arrest in England there were all sorts of ruses adopted to avoid a popular demonstration, and I was fetched overnight out of the Drury Lane orchestra, and Harry Wilson, the well-known solicitor, out of the stalls, on the same night—and we were both offered a hundred pounds if we could divulge the exact place of landing for the then popular "traitor." I, for my part, would at that time have been glad of a bit of "ready," but how it got out that I knew is a mystery. I really did know, but had to keep silent, and waited outside Bow Street till the appointed time, when they all arrived, and were committed to Holloway.

When on the "Sun" we laid a trap for two horrible people—a black doctor and his mistress—who used to advertise in the Sunday papers, to lure young women in trouble. They fell into the trap, and we libelled them purposely, and the two "Sun"-ites, a lady and gentleman, who carried on the campaign cheerfully, went into the dock on a criminal libel charge. I advised what counsel we were to retain in the entire case, and suggested Sir Charles Matthews, the present Public Prosecutor, Sir Horace Avory, now a judge of King's Bench, and Mr. John Maria Gatti—successor to his father, with his brother Rocco—who had a few days previously been called to the Bar. The result of this case was that in the end the black doctor and his lady got five years and three years respectively, and the S.E. district was ridded of two of its greatest human monsters.

Although Mr. J. Gatti was called to the Bar, he really never practised, electing with his brother to carry on the conventions of one of the finest businesses in England. What a table the old Gatti circle gathered round it for years—fifteen of which I well remember. Augustus Harris, Robert Buchanan, Henry Sampson, George R. Sims, Henry Pettit, poor William Terriss, and the most informal and convivial club that ever foregathered. Plays were written, theatres built, syndicates formed, house property changed hands, pleasant "soubri-

quets " coined, testimonials arranged, poor actors helped, rich actors admonished, many a struggler clinging to the last plank assisted forward by those two jolly good fellows whose names will ever be handed down to posterity for everything that was commendable in any project with which their names were associated.

One more "criminal" reminiscence and I have done. In a case in which I was interested at the Old Bailey, Sir Horace Avory cross-examined a witness on forty-nine counts of a plea of justification—the most terrible record I have ever read. "Yes," said the witness to the forty-ninth admission, "but you'll be accusing me of murder next." Avory looked down, turned over two pages of his brief, and said: "Which one do you mean?"

My financial resources never allowed me to get about much with Barney Barnato, whom I knew very well before the early African days. I once assisted him in his performance of "Salem Scudder" in "The Octoroon" at the Novelty Theatre, but did not see him for some years till he returned for good from South Africa. A story he told me at this time is of more or less interest, so I will quote it here with apologies for its crudeness.

In the early days of the South African boom they opened a new hall in Johannesburg, to be used principally as a synagogue. It was unanimously decided that Kruger should be invited to perform the ceremony. This he did, on condition that he would not have to make any speech (it was after the Majuba business), but merely formally declare it open and retire. The eventful day came, and every Hebrew for hundreds of miles was present. Oom Paul arrived, mounted the platform, raised his hat, gazed at the huge massed audience—mostly of the Jewish faithful present, and said but these few simple words: "I declare this hall open in the name of our Lord and Saviour"—but the rest was lost in the excitement of the moment.

Another humorous case at Bow Street about Coronation time may be cited. I had to wait the whole morning for one of the forensic faculty

employed therein—three light-fingered gentlemen engaged in the lucrative, but risky, game of "dipping," i.e. pocket or watch picking. These gentry, all three arrived on the Saturday before the Coronation—the day of the big Suffragist demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Unfortunately, they started business too early, for one was caught in the act of lifting an old gentleman's gun-metal "ticker" which he had that morning wisely substituted for a 100-guinea gold chronometer, and the other two were apprehended as accessories or "coverers." The "*flagrante delicto*" had on him £39, the other two had only a few shillings. They all three denied ever having seen each other. (1) Had come from Australia to see the Coronation—"quite natural that he should have a sum of money on his person;" (2) and (3) "never had seen the fust gent afore"—they came from Liverpool—loyalty—George Vth Coronation—quite natural that they should be in London—unfortunate that they should have been near the scene of operations. Result: No. 1 got six months' hard labour—the other two acquitted—really no evidence against them. In default of proof that it was the proceeds of robbery, the Magistrate ordered the £39 to be handed over to the solicitor acting for the convicted one, who, on the instruction of his client, ordered the money to be handed over to the other two "to carry on operations till I come out."

Not the least amusing incident arising from the olla podrida which I picked up in the Law Courts, was the personal experience of an old friend.

Owing to certain financial pressure, Arthur Sturgess, who wrote unaided the English version of "*La Poupée*," and collaborated in many of Old Drury's pantomimes, found himself one morning before Mr. Justice Bigham—now Lord Mersey. Now Arthur had written a song in Drury Lane pantomime which was a great success, called "I don't want to be a lady," and a Mrs Penruddock having been fined only by Mr. Justice Bigham for heartless cruelty to a child, the author adapted a verse to this

topic which was hugely encored every night for months. This was the verse :—

“ I don’t want to be a Lady,
 I don’t want to be “ select,”
 Always going “ everywhere,”
 Blazing jewels in my hair,
 While my little child is dying of neglect.
 I don’t want to face the public,
 Mothers would wish me good ;
 And though the Judge thought “ she’s a swell !
 Fifty pounds—A bagatelle,”
 Yet I wouldn’t be that lady—if I could.”

The chorus was repeated and these two lines substituted :—

“ And though Justice can be bought
 In a certain Judge’s Court.”

It was some time after this that the rendezvous between Judge and Author above-mentioned occurred, and this discussion between Judge and joker took place :

SOLICITOR : The Defendant, my lord, makes quite a lot of money.

JUDGE : Oh, does he ? How ?

SOLICITOR : Well, my lord, he writes all the successful songs for Drury Lane pantomime — (here opening the “ Daily Telegraph ”). One he has done this season is called, “ I don’t want to be a lady.”

JUDGE : Oh, he wrote that, did he ? (and the future Lord Mersey smiled).

SOLICITOR : He owes nearly £1200.

JUDGE : There will be an order made. You must pay ten shillings a month.

DEFENDANT : That will take me about 70 years.

JUDGE : That has nothing to do with me.

DEFENDANT : But supposing, my lord, I can’t pay the first ten shillings ?

JUDGE : In that case I should keep a money-box. Next case.

I must say this for Lord Mersey (Mr. Justice Bigham), that it never imbued him with any prejudice for the theatre, which he has patronized so much ever since, but his love for the stage is no doubt educated, as the Sisters Dare, Zena and Phyllis, were daughters of his ex-clerk, Mr Dones.

CHAPTER XIV

Andrew Melville—Four bars of "agit"—Realizing the posters—Picking up actors at Derby Station—The Maybrick case in "Faust"—Wilson Barrett—W. W. Kelly—The "queue" outside the Princess' box-office—The deadhead system—Mrs. Langtry as a pantomime fairy—Walton and Hemming—The clog dancer and the Prince of Wales—Richard Mansfield—"Ten minutes for refreshment"—Sam Lewis and the Peerage—Who wrote Shakespeare's Plays?

OF the old school of "legitimate" actors—that is, mummers who walked, talked, and stalked the country with what they were pleased to call abbreviatingly "the legit," *i.e.* legitimate, none was more popular than handsome George Melville, and there was born unto him a son Andrew, called by the irreverent "Merry Andrew." Andrew Melville, or, as he styled himself, "Mr. Emm," fretted his earlier struts on the stages at Swansea, Cardiff and Bristol. A large big generous-hearted, boyish figure, he attained a great popularity on his own particular circuit, and amassed a huge fortune with a haphazard method of theatrical management, which in his case, dying as he did worth £95,000, justified its own ends. He was the father of that celebrated firm who have given to the literature of the stage that peculiar library of which "The Worst Woman in London," "The Bad Girl of the Family," and "The Girl who lost her character," are the most successful specimens.

Apart from their literary attributes, it is astonishing how success has followed many a play which ran to length in their titles.

This long title is an old American dodge. At one time the average Yankee Crummles always favoured a long title. An English play once a success in our provinces as "Kindred Souls," was on its Transatlantic performance described as "Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire," and Mr. George R. Sims has an unpleasant remembrance of a play of his called "The Gay City" being toured in America as "Skipped by the Light of the Moon"; again, during this cycle of taste in long titles I remember seeing a hybrid sort of play in Philadelphia called "The Girl who eloped with a Circus Rider."

"Dagonet" could not for many years trace the means by which his brain effort was pirated for America till it was explained to him that two enterprising Yanks followed the English tour of his play, sat in the pit every night in each town and annotated all the dialogue on a succession of numbered visiting cards which they dropped into an inverted tall hat during the performance and duly transcribed night by night at the conclusion on their return to their hotel.

But to return to "Mr. Emm." I had previously visited his many theatres in various touring capacities, and I had many instances of his peculiar, but always straightforward methods, so that I was not quite taken by surprise when one Christmas Eve morning, 1888, he wired me to come to Birmingham and write the music for his first pantomime "St. George and the Dragon," to be produced on Boxing Morning to open the Grand Theatre, Birmingham. I arrived at Birmingham at three, and took down a list of forty numbers to be written or scored, really a month's work, and at six o'clock offered to go home and try to get some idea of how it was to be done. "Nonsense," said Melville, "we produce a new drama to-night called 'Bitter Cold,' or 'Two Christmas Eves,' and I want about sixty 'melos' numbers for that. Take them down." At this time musical directors travelled with a book of "agits," *i.e.*, *agitatos*, "slows"—that is, slow music for serious situations—"pathetics," "struggles," "hornpipes," "*andantes*"—to all

which adapted numbers called "melos" any dramatic situation was possible. Armed with my chart, I got on through the middle of the evening, when I saw a man writhing in agony on the stage. "My God!—I'm dying—curse her! She has poisoned me—but if there is justice in heaven may the rest of her life be a hell on earth—gug—gug—gug," writhed the actor, and down he fell prostrate. Just then the tube whistle in the orchestra blew hard. "Who's there?" said I. "Melville," was the reply. "Well, what of it?" I answered, "play up, old man." "I've no cue." "Cue be d—d! Don't you see a man dying on the stage? Give us four bars of 'agit.'"

Melville was called "Realize the Poster Melville." He bought up stocks of old picture posters, and whatever the play, he realized the poster in that play. I remember one Henry Hampton, an old actor, refusing at Newport to play "The Wandering Jew" with a dog following him all through the piece—just because there were some posters to be used up in which a dog played a prominent part.

To enlist a battlefield picture in "East Lynne" was quite an easy matter, as a vision would appear to the dying Willie Carlyle, and he would have a death scene written in—contemplating earning the V.C. on the battlefield—if he was not being prematurely killed by tuberculosis—said act of heroism being displayed (in the vision) with a super dressed in a costume sufficient of an anachronism in a stage setting which gave a Crimean outfit in a 1900 South African background, with a pound of red fire, two squibs, and a pistol shot.

The night of our pantomime season finished, the town of Birmingham was covered with posters and streamers announcing a play called "The Roll of the Drum." These he had bought from a stranded company of actors a few weeks previous. "But," I protested, "you have no company engaged." "Oh!" said Melville, "that's all right. I'm coming as far as Derby with you to-morrow (Sunday) and one can always pick up a few good actors there, or at Crewe, on their way home. And

so it was. A half-a-dozen actors *en route* to London "resting," a local historian or two, a few stray accessories—and he opened all right on the Monday night.

There were occasions, however, when things did not synchronize with good taste in his theatres—and this is one of them. The following appeared in the "Era" just about the time of the Maybrick case:—

"The gentleman who is playing Siebel in the melodrama of 'Faust' at the Grand Theatre, Birmingham, this week, has a line which was taken the other evening to be a sympathetic reference to Mrs. Maybrick. It was applauded to the echo, and the delighted actor was encouraged to make an even more pointed speech—'Better that sixteen hardened criminals should escape than one innocent creature suffer, so give the culprit the benefit of the doubt.' It was a daring thing to gag in Goethe—even Goethe chastened by T. W. Robertson."

And this, too, before the unhappy woman was relieved.

In his later days he had a habit of forgetting to answer letters, but if you met him and upbraided him with this carelessness he was on the alert at once—and "replied" then and there in quaint fashion—for he wore a large opera hat, with a writing pad and an unspillable excise ink-bottle inside, a small clasp holding his latest unanswered correspondence by his side. He would then say, "When did you write me?—oh yes, on the tenth," and ferret out the particular communication to which he would—still upright—scrawl a hasty reply on his improvised writing desk. I experienced this myself once on Brighton Pier, shortly before his death.

At this time I came a good deal in contact with Kelly, who had a great deal to do with the "Princess" in the old Wilson Barrett days. Wilson Barrett, it may be remembered, made a huge fortune—lost it—and then regained it with "The Sign of the Cross." "The Lights o' London,"

"The Romany Rye," "The Silver King," and others had all bulged out his earlier banking balances. These were in Henry Herman's days. Wilson Barrett always wanted to play "Hamlet." "Naffer—till I am ted" replied Herman, and so it was. Herman dead—"Hamlet" came and other financial failures with the prognosticated result—till "The Sign of the Cross" retrieved his fortunes and he paid everybody in full. Wilson Barrett was a man of great honour.

In the meantime, Kelly, after some personal ventures, tried to lead Wilson Barrett back to Oxford Street. At this time the creditors of both managers were many. So "Ben-my-Chree" by a then new author (Hall Caine) was announced. The first night was a triumph. Kelly went behind to see Barrett.

"What do you think?" said Kelly.

"A huge success," replied Barrett. "You read Clement Scott in the morning, 'a triumph.' Two columns in the 'D. T.' Run for twelve months," proudly boasted the actor manager.

"I don't think so," replied Kelly. "A good play; Hall Caine fine writer—but not 'Princess' goods."

"You're wrong, Kelly," said Barrett. "I know this theatre; to-morrow morning when you come down here you will find a *queue* outside the box-office leading down to Oxford Circus."

"Glad to hear it, Barrett. Good night," and Kelly went home a happier and a prouder man.

"Now," says Kelly (who tells the story well), "at that time I lived in St. John's Wood—a three-shilling cab-fare and money was not too flush; so the threepenny 'Atlas' 'bus sufficed in those days of slow locomotion. The morn was fine, the sun shone brightly—I left my house early. I had not slept all night; that '*queue*' of Barrett's haunted me—yes, a *queue* down to Oxford Street. What luck! What fortune! A wave of prosperity—no catching cold sitting in the overdrafts. No, shall I 'bus it this morning? I have four-and-six left; or shall I cab it? Barrett was right. I opened the

'Daily Telegraph'—two columns of Clement Scott's heroics. So I hailed a handsome, which I could ill afford. As we turned down Portland Place into the Oxford Street, there it was, sure enough! Barrett's '*queue*' was there. 'Joy, delight and luxury' 'Hurry up' (to the driver), 'I must get there quick' They might want assistance in the box-office—it might come on rain. In due course the cab pulled up. Three shillings! Lord! look at the *queue*—gave him four-and-six. The extra eighteen-pence—all the money I had, what did it matter? No more worry, overdrafts, or anxieties, and in I rushed. 'What's this?' I blurted out to the box-office keeper, who was indolently smoking a cigarette and not selling a ticket. 'Why don't you attend to the people?' "

* * * * *

"Yes, the *queue* was there a long one, but—not booking seats—but a horde of Barrett's creditors and mine! They had all seen Clement Scott's 'Daily Telegraph' notice, and came down early for a 'bit on account.' "

Poor Barrett! Poor Herman! How they quarrelled with H. A. Jones as to who really did write "The Silver King," and how Jones insisted on his name being suppressed, and how the play was announced as "By Henry Herman and——"! All this is dramatic history. And now Barrett and Herman are dead and the play is announced as by Henry A. Jones, ALONE.

Henry Pettit once kicked up a row because Kelly was running his "Black Flag" on the "transfer" system at the Olympic. This in the old days meant flooding the cheaper parts with paper or "dead-heads," and their "transferring" to a larger-priced portion of the auditorium, and so on; so much so that by the time the evening was through quite a respectable amount of money was paid into the "treasury." Pettit thought that he would be clever; so in order to swear a personal affidavit against Kelly he would slip into the gallery on a batch of these orders, unobserved. He

had provided himself with Kelly's "orders" for each part of the house, and as he was paid by a percentage on receipts his idea was to prove their real non-existence. I will tabulate his experiences :—

	s.	d.
Paid Early Door to Gallery . . .	6	
(to avoid "deadhead" crush)		
„ Transfer to 1s. 6d. Pit . . .	1	0
„ „ to 2s. 6d. Circle . . .	1	0
„ „ to 5s. Balcony . . .	2	6
„ „ to 10s. Stall . . .	5	6
„ Programme		6
„ Cloakroom		6
	<hr/> 11s. 6d. <hr/>	

"Fancy!" said Pettit, "it has cost me 11s. 6d. to see my own play with an order."

Few people who know that charming lady, delightful sportswoman and excellent actress, Lady de Bathe, will appreciate what a good-natured humorist she is in the cause of charity. She once with Claude Lowther, M.P. disguised herself as a flower-girl and sold flowers in the Haymarket outside the clubs to such a state of realism that Lord Brabazon did not recognize her, and made an appointment with her the next day to further patronize her floral wares. And again, at the Princess', during her "Antony and Cleopatra" season, she with Arthur Bourchier played a "harlequinade" to make money for the little ones in the Theatre.

Claude Lowther, who has just presented Herstonceaux Castle to the public, once got himself into trouble for an innocent piece of Carnivalian humour at Covent Garden. He dressed up a dummy of poor Gus Harris—Inverness cap and all, and worked it in imitation of making a speech from a private box, but to an unsympathetic and humorless officer in blue, who promptly carted the offending one to Bow Street.

In the old Covent Garden days under Charles Rice, the leading feature was "The Walton and

Hemming " family—a fine and old troupe of pantomimists, some of whom are still happily living. This family had a standing order with a Mr. Gillespie, who owned a small music-hall at Burnley, that if ever they had a week "out" they could always fill it in at short notice at a nominal salary. Thus they found Holy Week on their hands at the end of the pantomime season, and having been patronized by the Prince of Wales and suite at the Covent Garden the week previous, wired Gillespie :

"Coming next week. Announce us as having recently appeared before H.R.H. the Prince of Wales."

Thus they were advertised—the town posted—the engagement boomed. On the Monday night, during a clog-dance by one of the troupe—which dance is played very *piano* by the band to admit of the steps being heard—a man rose in the circle and shouted out :

"Waal, if yon's bin afore t' Prince of Wales, our Jack 'as no richt to be i' factry."

Richard Mansfield, time has shown, became a great actor. When I met him on tour playing Sir Joseph Porter, in "Pinafore" he had about six pounds a week, and led a more or less secluded life of cynical comments, ascetic aphorisms, and Bohemian peculiarity. He was hard up, so he said, on Chester platform one Sunday, and offered to sell me the *libretto* of a one-act comic opera for three pounds if I paid him a deposit of ten shillings at once. I forked out the only ten shillings I had, not being able to appreciate which was the greater calamity—me a poor touring *chef d'orchestre* without money, or he, an important star actor in a similar capacity. He duly delivered the play. It was called "Ten Minutes for Refreshment." It had one of the longest runs on record; first produced it ran at the Olympic for two weeks; then purchased by the late H. J. Hitchens for six pounds, it ran at the Royalty for sixteen weeks; and later on at the

Empire for sixteen weeks. At one time we saw a good deal of each other. But he was a peculiar bird, and recently in America he would hardly speak to me.

It was during this period that I met the late Duke of Newcastle, who in common with other strawberryed nobles patronized the theatre a good deal—not merely from the front of the house. His Grace of Newcastle was so interested in one “leg-show” house—as burlesque temples were then called—that he had a suite of rooms furnished over the Green Room, and being an ardent Roman Catholic, had Mass said every morning as a fit and proper overture to the day’s good work.

At the opera in Harris’ days I often promenaded the foyer during the *entr’actes* with the late Sam Lewis, the famous moneylender whose bequests to charity were epoch-making in their munificence, whom I knew in childhood’s days in his early Dublin beginnings. As we walked up and down one night our conversation was interrupted with recognitions from me to the various passers-by: “Good evening, Lord——”; “Yes, Your Grace, we will possibly do ‘Tristan’ on Saturday.” “No, Lord——, Madame Melba does not sing till the 25th,”—and so on, till Sam said, “You seem to know ‘em all ‘ere.”

“Oh,” I replied, “purely official. But surely you know most of them, Mr. Lewis?”

“Yes, of course I do; but they don’t know me here; but on Monday morning at No. 6 Cork Street, their affability is wonderful. I’ll have them all in regularly—sure as nuts.”

The death of Sir William S. Gilbert reminds me that he periodically repudiated all the clever things attributed to him in conversational repartee. The hero of more inverted commas than Shakespeare, was an old friend of mine, and during the Collin’s *régime* he sent me a telegram every Christmas Eve for twelve years, asking me to reserve him two seats for the dress rehearsal, “right behind you.” He loved to hear the children sing the comic songs, although expressing himself as doubtful as to their

humour, and was always interested to see the scheme of colour worked out of the pantomime. Of its comedians, he could enjoy them all—except the music-hall portion, and these he could not tolerate. It has not been generally stated that a good deal of his fortune he invested in bricks and mortar; apart from his Savoy interest he was the freeholder of the Garrick Theatre.

All the stories about his being rude to people are all moonshine. I have conducted his operas and met him socially, and my experience has always been as others'—a real English gentleman. His writings speak for themselves, but one thing may be noticed—the model that he worked up. From the "Sorcerer" onwards he made all his characters, on their first entrance, acquaint the audience as to their identity—just a few: "My name is John Wellington Wells—I travel in Magical Spells" (Sorcerer). "I am the Captain of the Pinafore, and a right good captain too!" "I'm dear little buttercup" (Pinafore). "A wandering Minstrel, I" (Mikado), and so on right down to the end of the chapter. He was generous as an opponent, and when he once politely refused to be interviewed by an impertinent American journalist, and the journalist replied, "I shall be pleased to write your obituary for nothing," he behaved magnanimously in the legal proceedings which followed. The last time I ever spoke to him was on Christmas Eve last, 1910, when he remarked on the serious development of the heavy pieces of music played while the pantomime scenes were changed. "Why," said the Bab Balladist, "it means a dozen small overtures—I wonder how Sullivan would have got through it?" This, or course, referred to Sullivan's laziness, and invariable neglect to write or compile any overture for his operas, which, in early days, he left to Alfred Cellier, and in later times, as I have remarked, to Hamilton Clarke.

Poor Hamilton Clarke! How he used to love to tell the story of the "h'less" ballet master rehearsing the dances in Irving's "Faust"! "Lydies—

remember you're not dancing on 'amstead 'heath, you're dancing in 'ell."

W. S. Gilbert's father, on the other hand, *was* a gentleman with a choleric temper, and it is quite possibly that the sins of the father were unjustifiably visited on the boy. Gilbert *père* once called at the "Saturday Review" office—in which paper a criticism of one of his books had appeared to which he took objection. "On what business, sir?" queried the office boy to the writer's demand. "To thrash the Editor," was the naïve reply—but the Editor was "out."

Of stories fathered on to popular personalities there is no end, the latest of which is that Seymour Hicks when producing R. Louis Stevenson's "Hampden Club" at the Coliseum referred to it as written by "the author of 'Dorothy.'" Shades of Robert Louis and B. C. Stephenson—the latter a genial, clever writer, whose most exciting experience in life was his being arrested as a murderer in Switzerland, and whose good fortune was the fact that the Brothers Gatti—Senators then in the Swiss Parliament—were near at hand to bail him out.

CHAPTER XV

Olla Podrida—The progress of the music-hall—"Faust" in a music-hall in the 'Sixties—"Potted" opera no novelty—Types of singers in the past—The Sisters Leamar—Belle Bilton, *i.e.* Lady Dunlo, the Countess of Clancarty—Various music-hall stars—The Empire—Starting it as a music-hall—"Wiry Sal"—Jack Jarvis—George Edwardes—"Refreshment contractor"—And Manager—The Palace—Its opening—Its failure—Its finance—Its success—The improvement in the music—Sound music for the people—"The Times" protests—I reply—General remarks—An Irish inscription—Two "Faust" stories—Strauss and Wagner—A "*Caux*" *célèbre*—Nicolini—Actress—Peeresses.

DURING my time there has never been any amusement development which has been so marked as the change in the temperament of the music-hall. I use the word "change," not improvement, advisedly because in many senses the alteration has only been a reversion to type, but still under conditions which bode well for the better amusements of the classes. In the music-hall proper—now submerged into the words "variety theatre"—it is usual to date back all records from Charles Morton at the old Canterbury in the Westminster Bridge Road, which contained sufficient pictures on its walls to have it described by George Augustus Sala in "Punch" as "The Academy over the water," and to all intents and purposes it is not a very bad landmark, for at a time when those operatic managerial giants Mapleson and Gye were discussing the merits of a newly-produced opera in Paris called "Faust" by Charles Gounod, it was at the Canterbury Music-hall that Gounod's music

was actually first heard in England. Indeed, Mapleson took Mdle. Tietjens to the Canterbury to hear this "Operatic selection" before he decided to do it at the old Her Majesty's Theatre. Tietjens was the original "Marguerite" in English, and Sir Charles Santley, the original "Valentin," is the sole survivor of the opera's first English performance on any stage.

It will be seen, then, that if the music-hall proper commences with "Faust" by Gounod in 1861, it has not "progressed" much, but merely amplified its former artistic nature in 1912, when we find the Carl Rosa and Moody and Manners forces in the great fight for variety theatre "bill topping." Again, Emily Soldene did a "potted" version of Hervé's "Chilperic" in the 'Seventies in the halls, so that "condensed" comic opera is nothing very new when one comes to consult the records, so all the snobbish "flap-doodle" about the indignity of "going on the halls" in the 'Eighties was mere bunkum. From the 'Sixties to the 'Eighties we had very little to cater for the music-hall taste except the Canterbury Hall just mentioned on one side of the water, and the London Pavilion, Oxford and Royal (Weston's) in Holborn on the West-end side. The "Great Vance," who died suddenly on the stage of the "Sun" music-hall, Knightsbridge, on a Boxing Night what time he was singing a song called "Is he guilty?"; the "Great" Macdermott introducing "We don't want to fight—but by Jingo if we do"; George Leybourne, "Champagne Charlie," and nearly all down to the James Fawn and the Arthur Roberts schools all marked time. These two latter are still enjoying a merry existence, and so also is Horace Lingard, who sang—

" On the beach at Brighton
On a Summer's Day."

at the Canterbury in the 'Sixties, and who afterwards married the charming actress, Alice (Dunning) Lingard. The topical and motto vocalists, Charles Williams and Fred Albert—only to mention two names—the "Two Sisters" turn,

the descriptive vocalist and the sentimental balladist all made up a programme of more or less variety. In these days "The Chairman" who sat in the middle of the stalls "with 'is 'ammer in 'is 'and," called "order" to the rowdy gallery and vouchsafed his "orders" at the expense of the favourite few who surrounded his table, was the general manager of the whole entertainment. He could kill an encore with his "Mr. So-and-so will oblige again—later on in the evening," or he could make one with his hammer applause and raucous "encores"—in these cues giving the lead to all and sundry interested in their particular stage idol or divinity.

Many were the various types of "The Sisters" turn, one of the more popular being "The Dashing Sisters Leamar," one of which married a Mr. Duncombe of the Feversham peerage. To the strains of the notorious "My Queen" waltz these ladies packed the old Royal, Holborn, and there all the young bloods went to hear them sing:—

"Go and inform your *Fath-er*
Won't he be angry? *Rath-er*!
Mention the youth,
Tell him the truth;
Nothing conceal,
Say how you feel."

Later on we had "The Sisters Bilton"—Florrie, who married a Mr. Seymour, and Belle, who became the first Countess of Clancarty.

I first took these two in hand as children—what time my uncle, W. F. Glover, was conductor, and I succeeded him with a children's "Cloches de Corneville" Company, in which they were infant choristers, then run by Charles Bernard of Bernard and Christy's Minstrels. It was from Mr. Christy that the term "Christy Minstrel" was evolved. We opened at the old Gaiety Theatre under John Hollingshead, and toured for some months. It was necessary that we should house, feed and clothe the sixty prodigies in each town, and many a happy afternoon I spent with the two little Bilton girls, one on each knee, telling them fairy stories; then

they grew up, came into my adult "Cloches" Company—Shiel Barry, the original, as the Miser—left the stage proper, and joined the music-halls. Later on I think I had a hand in the reconciliation between Lord and Lady Dunlo. Whilst his Lordship was in Australia I assisted her considerably, aiding her to win her divorce, and for my pains had her personal thanks on the night of the verdict in her favour, when, as before stated, she visited the Comedy Theatre with Sir Augustus Harris, under whose management she was about to tour. Harris announced her as :—

LADY DUNLO

in

"VENUS"

and Florence Bilton, her sister, then with a more or less rival attraction "Faust-up-to-date" Company, the same week was announced as :—

FLORRIE BILTON

sister of

LADY DUNLO

in

FAUST UP TO DATE

Alas, those old Gaiety days :—

"Gone away are the Gaiety girls,
With their powered noses and tricked-up curls;
Gone away are these syrens smart,
Fertile of kisses, but barren of heart—
Bowing alternately cold and hot—
Steadfastly sticking to all they got—
Filling a bevy of hot-brained boys
With maddening hopes of untasted joys."

Thus the admiring scribe when the old house was

pulled down to meet a County Council improvement.

I do not intend this chapter to be in any way too historical or analytical, only a cursory introduction to give one an idea of the evolution of the present music-hall. For this reason I may mention some other names; the great Jenny Hill—great in every sense—Bessie Bellwood, or Charles Godfrey, or many others—both of these descriptive vocalists of giant strength.

When we talk of the novelty of modern play sketches in the modern music-hall, what about "The Stowaway" with Jenny Hill in the 'Eighties, the natural pathos and strength of drama of which it took a whole column by Clement Scott in the "Daily Telegraph" to depict? This was an Adelphi-esque sketch written by Frederick Bowyer and packed the old Canterbury Music-hall for weeks. Or out of a thousand others in the lyric world, Charles Godfrey's "Hi-tiddily-hi-ti"—a bibulous ditty which ranks, as an item, with the best of Paulus and the most human of Yvette Guilbert.

The "descriptive" song had, of course, its cheap moments. A curiously illiterate but none the less popular example, often quoted at the time, was:

"The honest servant-girl—God defend her.

What cleans up your hearthrug and your fender

But what I want to know,

Yes, I want to know—*IS*—

What have they done with

Mr. Peabody's *MON—E—E*?"

I have accented in Capitals the points emphasized in rendition by the singer.

This, as may be noticed, is not rhyme, reason or sense, but it really is not a bad specimen of the class of poor literature which flooded the few music-halls then about—sandwiched in with some of the better class of entertainment mentioned before.

Albert Chevalier started a new era of music-hall literature. As an actor he had attained fame at the

theatre—at least, fame before it was a day of £300 a week comedians. In his spare moments he wrote plays, burlesques and songs—yes, real songs—those lovely Coster ditties which charmed all and sundry at soirees, at-homes, or private functions, notably the old Pelican “smokers” and *Bons Frères* concerts at the Café Royal. But for years nothing would persuade him to give the huge outside public the benefit of his great art and talent—but he succumbed at last, and I shall never forget his nervous anticipation a few hours before he appeared in the London Pavilion on his opening night as we cheered him up in the neighbouring Pelican Club. “Our ‘Armonic Club’”—“‘Ave a glass a-long o’ me won’t-ye,” “The Crushed Tragedian”—all were delightful.

It is interesting to show how some of these songs came to be written. Notably “‘Ave a glass a-long o’ me.” There was a dear little fellow—an actor named Alfred Balfour who used to frequent the old Gaiety bar—called “Prossers Avenue” on account of the number of hard-up-half-crown-borrowing-drink-cadging actors who haunted its portals. Balfour used to have a regular appointment there with an old friend, but his pride was so great that fearing that his inability to purchase drinks might be translated into a tacit cadging for nourishment—he always made his very first speech on entering the bar in this fashion. “Is Mr. So-and-so here—No?—I’m sorry—‘Ave a glass a-long o’ me—what-won’t ye—well, good day,” and off he went. Chevalier immortalized this in his well-known song, as he did also poor Balfour’s remark “I’ve played Touch-is-tone in Shakespeare’s ‘If-you-like it?’ and still I don’t get hon”; this in the “Crushed Tragedian.”

Further contributing to this upward tendency was a short season at the Empire after the “Lady of the Locket.” It was in its compilation a cross between the best conditions of the old Covent Garden promenade concert and the now popular variety theatre. Its first musical sponsors were Luigi Arditi, Mapleson’s Covent Garden maestro,

and the present writer. Arditi conducted the first portion of the entertainment, and I directed the second or more "popular"—as the programme had it—selection. We also did short "*divertissements*" or "dances," and this season was about the last appearance of Mdlle. Sara—"Wiry Sal"—who one night objecting to the way I was conducting, took off one of her high-heeled boots, in which she always danced, and threw it at me in the orchestra. "Wiry Sal," or Mdlle. Sara (the name was taken from the then Sarah Bernhardt popular vogue), at the time was at the Oxford Music-hall contemporary with two Hungarian big-boot dancers, Imre and Bolossy Kiralfy, the same "White City" Imre Kiralfy.

The word "Sarah" was on everybody's lips, and it was thought to be a good "imitation" for the variety houses—a species of "fraud on the label," now, alas! only too common.

This Empire season was under the direction ostensibly of Messrs. De Chastelaine and Le Vargues. The latter was the owner of the Hotel de Paris, now the Queen's, next door, but the finance was supplied by Messrs. Jarvis and George Edwardes—the latter, dear old friend, not then known to Gaiety and Daly's fame—and "Sara" was engaged, being the wife of "Long Jack Jarvis," the brother of the other partner. Messrs. Jarvis and Edwardes had also—for two or three weeks—run "The Lady of the Locket" when O'Hagan dropped it. This partnership was really "The Edwardes Menu Company" which ran the refreshment bars at most of the theatres.

But no—this combination of splendid song, stories, good ballet and good music, did not then catch on, and the further history of the Empire was more or less "wrapt in mystery," questionable finance and doubt till the Augustus Harris-George Edwardes Empire *régime*, the latter by this time also at the Gaiety; the rest is known. Except for one week in the Ormiston Chant business, the house has never closed. But in the meantime, Mr. D. Nicols, the proprietor of the Café Royal, who then

owned the freehold, and whose estate is still in possession, tried a theatrical flutter or two, one of which was a comic operatic spectacle "The Palace of Pearl." Somebody hoodwinked the French *restaurateur* into the belief that the way to soothe the Press was to "feed the brutes," so, anticipating a dual advertisement for his theatre and his restaurant, he sent out with all his first-night Press tickets also an invitation for dinner at the Café Royal at 6.30. And then, as Pepys says, "on to the Empire." But at this period London journalists had not yet recovered from an old taunt about their being easily bought with "chicken and champagne" and poor old Nicols' "*soixante couverts*" stood alone at the Café Royal at 6.30 untouched, uneaten, unrecorded, and his Empire production simply ran a few unsuccessful weeks and petered out.

The Harris-Edwardes Empire *régime* ended in Augustus Harris going out—and there always was a little antagonistic rivalry between "Gus" and George—and for years he really felt that he made an error in this secession and was not easy till he started the Palace Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue.

"Gus," shortly before his death, entered the musical comedy world, and this George Edwardes tilted at good-humouredly. Producing a musical play at Wolverhampton, called "The Telephone Girl," Gus wired :—

"GEORGE EDWARDES,

" 'Telephone Girl' enormous success—can I have the Gaiety Theatre? "

To which the wily, Gaiety good fellow replied :—

"DEAR GUS,

"Glad to hear that Wolverhampton likes your musical comedy production."

This brings one to what was considered the first move in the new music-hall—the story of its failures and its ultimate successes—none so great as now,

when we hear that £700 a week is being paid to two stars. When the Palace Theatre got into its stride, so to speak, it gave the lead-off to the "variety palace" or "theatre of varieties."

The Palace was promoted by an American—since dead—Albert Netter. Its opening was the most tumultuous first-night I had ever experienced. Augustus Harris had forgotten the fact that all the seats had been booked for weeks, and when on a cold December day, a thousand first-nighters, who had waited from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., were told they could only get "standing room," they forcibly took possession of the booked accommodation—and the rest was chaos. Two ballets, "The Sleeper Awakened," by "Richard Henry" and Albert Renaud, and "London to Paris," by Cecil Raleigh—for the latter of which I wrote the music in ten days—were in the bill, but at 12.15 after midnight, we had only got half through the second ballet, and as it was Sunday morning, the curtain dropped suddenly, and the band played "God save the Queen," to clear out as moody and discontented a house as ever hissed a play. Failure was written everywhere, for weeks we trundled on, not knowing one week where the next week's finance was to come from, and at one moment I think at least thirty-three winding-up petitions stared us in the face. At last came a public meeting—a huge growling-for-blood crowd of disappointed shareholders—the appearance on the stage of Sir A. Harris (since dead), George Augustus Sala (also gone), Count Max Hollander a kind and sympathetic gentleman (he too has also joined the great majority)—a loud raucous oration from Mr. Wildey Wright, barrister (dead), who had been "retained" as a barrister, and "qualified" as a shareholder—and an appeal for five shillings a share for reconstruction by the Drury Lane Napoleon, who said, "You know me, you knew my father, do what I tell you," and the position was saved. Notwithstanding this, Alfred Beyfus, the Company's solicitor, who was brother-in-law to Max Hollander, immediately sold two thousand one-pound shares for fourpence each, and

we all went off to Paris to discuss a new ballet called "The Race for Life," by Cecil Raleigh, Augustus Harris, and James M. Glover. This scheme was never carried through as a ballet, for in the meantime the "Tableaux Vivants" had arrived at the Palace, and Harris and Raleigh with Henry Hamilton turned the ballet into one of their most successful plays, "The Derby Winner."

In Paris, where we all voyaged to consider the future, during this period, we were a merry throng—Augustus Harris, Max Hollander, Ernest Polden, Alfred Beyfus, and Eugene Cremetti. In all our Shaftesbury trouble, Cremetti was the one optimist. He was not a director—then, but as the partner in Hollander and Cremetti he was deeply concerned, financially. He had one saying in French, "*Mon cher ami, il faut trouver un clou*"—and he was right. The "*clou*" was found. But when Beyfus was selling at fourpence a share, Eugene was buying them at three-and-sixpence, and I believe he is the largest shareholder now. The "Tableaux" were the last hope. Not one of the directors was present at the dress rehearsal, which I conducted—my last appearance at the Palace—so that they were all naturally enough anxiously awaiting me in the courtyard of the Grand Hotel to hear what Cremetti called the "*dernieres nouvelles*." As I got out of the cab and shook a hasty hand-shake with Sir Arthur Sullivan, then in Paris—Augustus Harris and the entire Board pounced down on me for my verdict. "Well," I said, "the Palace is either made on Tuesday morning or you are all in the dock at Bow Street, under Lord Campbell's Act, for publishing indecent pictures." I never saw a more crestfallen crowd of theatrical and financial magnates in the world—for in addition to this there was the fact that the Licensing Sessions for the London County Council was to open on the Monday—the same day as the *début* of the "Tableaux Vivants" and the Palace would not be in the licensing list till the following Thursday—thus giving time for any Ormiston Chant agitation that might arise. However, Charles Morton had been to Clement Scott—

asked him to give him, his old friend, "a leg up," and two hours after the "Daily Telegraph" came out the next morning the box-office was besieged, and the Palace has never looked back since.

The night that the success of the theatre was made by the "Tableaux Vivants" we all dined in Paris at the Café de Paris, and later on supped in Harris' private suite at the Grand. Argument ran high. Harris said he would not have anything further to do with the "unlucky hole," and offered to sell his bundle of shares to Cremetti. At this time the shares were officially quoted at ninepence, and Harris, at 3 a.m. in my presence in his room, accepted Cremetti's offer to be bought out at three-and-six to the extent of some thousands.

Now all this bargaining was done in a volume of high words, and when Cremetti left the room, a hand tapped on the adjoining door and a voice cried, "*Dites donc, Monsieur! A cette heure faut coucher—c'est trois heures du matin.*"

"One minute," said Harris. "Who is this impertinent chap? *Mon cher ami*," continued Harris, "*à qui est cette maison—cette hôtel—je suis chez moi et je ferais tous que je veut.*"

To this the Frenchman replied more annoyingly, and to this Harris made some remark that the interruption was "*mal élevé.*" Crash! What a row! "I thought that would rile him," said "Druriolanus"—and it did.

I never heard such a noise in my life—a jump out of bed—a man crying in French, "I shall send my seconds to you in the morning!" Harris stating that he had to be in England—the other asserting, "*Mais non, vous ne partez pas, c'est une affaire d'honneur*"—a long silence, then finally the voice, "*Alors je m'en vais vous donner un coup de pistolet!*" I rushed out in the corridor to find an enraged Frenchman running up and down with a loaded pistol, wanting to shoot somebody. Honestly speaking I really would have liked to do an English journalistic coup, "Attempted assassination of Sir Augustus Harris in a Paris Hotel," "Jimmy Glover

to the rescue," etc. It would have read splendidly, I thought. I admit, however, that the glittering shining pistol, the enraged Frenchman, the excited corridor full of enraged sleepers—just wakened up—had a most soothing effect on my journalistic ambition.

But peace—beautiful peace—soon reigned, and in the morning the disturbed one made a formal complaint. All the evening we had been arguing with Beyfus, and now it appeared we had been fighting with Dreyfus—that was the name of the sleeper awakened by our discussion of Palace Theatre finance. He was a provincial corn merchant, who had used the hotel for years, and known to be of an excitable choleric nature.

One of the first secessions from the theatre to the halls was the appearance at the Empire of the late Amy Roselle. This gave vent to an immense amount of controversy, but the thin edge of the wedge once in, the rest soon followed. "I want to see your father," said the new curate to the ex-convict's boy. "He's out, and he don't want no sky-pilots spying round," was the impudent reply. "Ah me! at his old games again! I want your father's body to get into heaven—at present he's only got in his head and shoulders." "Garn!" replied the boy, "that's all right. I never knew any crib father cracked that if he once got his head and shoulders in, his body wasn't sure to follow very soon."

So it was about this time the stage got its head and shoulders in, and now we have the double licence, and soon the music-hall will be a thing of the past—in its old form. The best of the old *régime* remains, but there are no Jenny Hills, Fannie Leslie, Bessie Bellwoods, Nelly Powers, or their male prototypes, and so the tabloid drama, opera, etc., fills the bill, fills the house, and fills the shareholders' pockets.

In looking for the improvement in the music-hall, it is useful to note that the ballad and "comique" literature has made no advancement. It is in Tottenham Court Road upholstery and the modern

craze for luxury that the new improvement has arisen, and one by one huge "Palaces" and "Empires" grow up, which out-do each other in splendour, but Dan Lenos, Marie Lloyds, and Albert Chevaliers do not appear with rullombrosian thickness, and so one is inclined to the belief that the drama will have everything its own way, and that the ancient music-hall will soon be a rare curiosity. The picture theatre, of course, has to be reckoned with in the movement, but entirely through the absence of talent of its own particular *genre* the country is over-music-halled in bricks and under-supplied in brains, and is now lapping over the theatre, to the latter's disadvantage, and in the end we find that in many cases theatre-land is overdone.

There is, however, hope that the new order of things bids for a better class of literature in the variety world. A few remaining examples of the red-nosed comedian and his equally offensive associates may exist, but it is encouraging to know that all that is good and clean appeals to the multitude, and we may yet further improve on even the present remarkable "levelling up" in our daily amusements.

The humorous part of this movement is that any opposition to any improvement in the lighter amusements has always been met by the "light-toned" and "elect" with opposition ill-natured, ignorant, and bigoted. I myself "invented" or permanently revived the music-hall "Selection by the Band" of good music at the Palace; the Alhambra and the Empire followed suit, the Tivoli and others joining in the procession where works of good masters are now invariably the order of the night.

In pantomime I have for twenty years tried to raise the level of the music. Good music for the people all the time—never dull, but always good. Two years ago, however, the real crux came. I did not want to give too much music-hall jingle to the masses—besides, they had, in the years of Wagner, Beethoven, Gounod, and other maestri,

been educated to expect always a "disclosure" from me. I gave it to them. Tchaikovsky's "Pathetic," played by a band of fifty-two, and twelve harps.

But no good young academic person protested—where do you think?—in "The Times." And a lengthy discussion was the result. But I soon "made reply" and showed how I might have easily adopted another *metier* and used for my purposes the melodic accompaniments of such music-hall literature as :—

"Come where the booze is cheaper,
Come where the pots hold more,
Come where the boss is a bit of a joss,
Come to the pub next door."

Of the beautiful waltz refrain of :—

"Beer, beer, glorious beer,
Fill yourself right up to here."

Or perhaps the enervating lilt of :—

"Stop your tickling, Jock."

And again :—

"A little bit off the top."

For these were at my hands as the popular songs of the people.

Most of my experiences of these amusements and other matters of public interest came to me what time I was musical and dramatic critic for the "Sun" and the "Weekly Sun" for five or six years; when I acted in a like capacity for the "Evening News"; also the "Daily Mail," which had me on its staff down to 1910, when I had the honour of writing a series of signed articles for the "Daily Telegraph," some small quotation of which I have ventured to import; but, of course, for nineteen years my personality at Drury Lane has been the one thing which has justified my daring to write this book.

And it is really curious how you come to experience so many strange emotions, hob-nob with so much "flotsam and jetsam," and generally pick up such a wide knowledge of the world's art, crime, and Bohemianism.

It was in this way that I had a sort of "first pull" on the great Liverpool Bank frauds, a "scoop" of which I could not really make sufficient use. The facts arose as near as possible as follows:—

A bank clerk named Goudie in a Liverpool house had charge of the ledgers from A to H. All cheques drawn on these accounts come to him. He starts forging and spending large sums of money, and is met in a train from Newmarket by one or two of the "bhoys," i.e. race-course questionables. They then divining that a forty-shillings-a-week bank clerk must have some exceptional means of backing horses in large amounts, devise a scheme for him, which ultimately gives him ten years' penal servitude and a like sentence to a well-known pugilist. But before all this justice comes about, Mr. Hudson, the soap-maker, on whose account the operations were made, had lost many thousand pounds. It is strange, but this crime was public property for many months before the truth, as Lord Justice Matthew said once, did "out, even in an affidavit." It was offered to me, and to several other journalists—who feared to touch it—but one incident happened which led to publicity of much use in the discovery of the plot. I was in the waiting-room of a West-end toilet saloon one night with an Irish-American *chevalier d'industrie*—one of the very best of the brigade, and to him spoke a racing tout named S——. "I say, guv'nor, I've often given yer a good tip or two—now I'm stoney (financially) broke: lend us a fiver for the week-end. I've had a bad time, and there's the wife and two children without any Sunday dinner." My Hibernian friend, always generous to a fault, passed over the fiver and said, "Jimmie, I have often made a bit out of his tips, and I hadn't the heart to refuse." Some two or three months passed. We—the benefactor and the

present writer—were sitting in the Café Royal about *aperitif* time. Suddenly there burst in the before-mentioned borrower, bedizened with diamonds and in the pink of luxury. "Good evening, gents!" Noticing my friend, his former benefactor, "Hello! old sport, I'm awfully glad to meet you! Will you and yer friend pack your throats (*i.e.* eat) with me?" Now, this was out of the question, as it would not have been worth our while to have been consciously seen in this gentleman's company. Apologies followed—we had "another friend coming," etc., with whom "we were going to dine," and so on—and so to the inner room M—and I disappeared to wait for the apocryphal host, who, of course, never came. In the middle of our dinner the "bhoys" came in, noticed our solitude, sat down, and taking out a bundle of bank-notes, threw one on the table. "There y'are, guv'nor, that's what I owe you. Good night!" and out he walked. M— opened the note and found, to his astonishment, not a five-pound note, but a fifty-pound one. For a moment he stared, then, as if suddenly achieving an inspiration, asked me to follow him and rushed out to the outer room, where the "tout" was still wineing with a selection of his own "friends," and burst out, "Here! you've made a mistake. I only lent you a fiver: this is fifty!" "Never you mind," promptly retorted the other, "you refused to dine with me, and that's to show you how I pay people back who do *me* a good turn."

This sort of criminal extravagance led to the discovery of the whole plot. The various methods employed to hide the "swag," *i.e.* money, being diverse and curious—even to a well-known music-hall manager (since deceased) being induced to fill his office safe with bundles of notes to the tune of thousands of pounds; a payment through the bank might have led to quicker detection.

Leaving a West-end music-hall one night several of us were invited by a well-known Bohemian to dinner at a popular restaurant. We sat down to as sumptuous a menu as one could have wished, and

had just finished the soup when an awkward hiatus occurred. Our host was called on by the proprietor, and an angry dialogue took place. "You owe me a bill here of old standing—twenty pounds," angrily shouted the Boniface; "and unless I receive something now, immediately, on account, not another morsel will you or your guests receive here to-night."

Protest was useless—the proprietor was adamant—but to our room quickly returned our host and candidly explained the situation. All offers to lend the necessary were of no avail. "Certainly not—all follow me," so we filed out, ascended the Haymarket, to Scott's, and, on the instructions of our host, each purchased a lobster, a kipper, some dried haddocks, and other uncooked fish. Back to the still waiting, unused *couverts* we wended our way, took our seats as before, rang for the manager and ordered him to have the succulent but, by this time, strong-smelling fish "cooked immediately."

It transpired that this hotel had originally existed as an inn, and only possessed an innkeeper's licence, and that in requiring this food to be cooked we were within the strict terms of the law. But poor old Pentecost, once of Epitaux's and the Café d'Europe—everybody remembers him in the Haymarket—fell in with the joke, and in the end he served the dinner and, like the good sportsman he was, stood us the wine.

In a book of this description, where anecdote, experience, opinion, and recitation all jostle each other, it is hard to know under what heading the smaller humours of life are to be placed, and therefore I had determined to call this particular chapter "Olla Podrida." If I were in France "*le panier de salade*" would be better. Everybody knows the honest French house-wife's *vade mecum*—the string bag called the "*panier de salade*" in their French slang used to describe that very necessary official vehicle, known in this country as "The Black Maria."

Passing through an environ of Cork County one

day I was amused to see an inscription across some feudal gates which attracted my attention for the moment, but of which I took no notice till I was told its full story and sequel. It appears that some one had inscribed the following doggerel as a kind of Orange insult to the local Romans :

“A Greek, Jew, Turk, or Atheist
May enter here, but not a Papist;”

underneath which a Roman Catholic local travelling sign-writer had painted :

“Whoever wrote this did it well,
The same is writ on the Gates of Hell,”

which, after everything is said and done, is not quite the best translation over Dante’s “Inferno.”

And talking of Dante’s “Inferno” suggests again Gounod’s “Faust,” where Mephistopheles in the last act—the Apotheosis scene—descends amidst much red fire to Hades. At Belfast once the descending-trap stuck. Mr. Mephistopheles was in addition slightly given to embonpoint, and the “Devil” remained a stationary problem for the stage manager to settle, when a voice from the gallery shouted out, “Hooro, bhoys, Hell’s full!”

But poor Federici—the original Pirate King in Gilbert and Sullivan’s “Pirates of Penzance” at Paignton—actually died going down the trap with the red fire burning round him, during a performance of “Faust” in Australia.

The Richard Straus school of music, which has had its ephemeral promenades in Queen’s Hall and Covent Garden, has evolved just the same sort of ribald criticism in some quarters which greeted Richard Wagner when J. W. Davidson—a rabid anti-Wagnerite—published the following “Direc-

tion for Composing a Wagner Overture," in "The Musical World":

"A sharp where you'd expect a natural;
A natural where you'd expect a sharp;
No rule observe but the exceptional;
And then (first happy thought!) bring in a
HARP!

"No bar a sequence to the bar behind;
No bar a prelude to the next that comes;
Which follows which you really need not mind;
But (second happy thought!) bring in your
DRUMS!

"For harmonies, let wildest discords pass;
Let key be blent with key, in hideous hash;
Then (for last happy thought!) bring in your
BRASS!

• "And clang, clash, clatter—clatter, clang, and
clash!"

This, I think, if my memory serves me right, was written after a night during the Neuman Season at Her Majesty's, when the affairs of the late Marquis de Caux—the first husband of Adelina Patti—excited a great deal of attention, and the same organ burst into verse in dealing with the subject:

A CAUX CÉLÈBRE

"Adelina was handsome, and sung
In a way that enchanted the folks;
She was talented, thoughtless, and young,
And she married the Marquis de Caux.

"Her cash was his principal care—
His conduct her feelings oft shocks—
Adelina was urged to despair
By the acts of the Marquis de Caux.

"A tenor, whose tenor of life
Wasn't even, by numerous chalks,
Was the cause of additional strife
'Twixt the songstress and Mister de Caux.

“He paid her attention quite marked,
Whereupon came a general row;
From Russia in haste they embarked
For Paris, the Marquis de Caux.

“They brought up the matter in court,
And the way that it ended you know—
Dissolution was granted as sought,
Good-bye to the Marquis de Caux.

EXPLANATION

“Of such of my readers as lack
Apprehension of recondite jokes,
And wish things in plain white and black,
I would ask, How do *you* pronounce ‘Caux’?”

A good many stories are told of Nicolini—Patti's second husband. He was generally credited with a reputation for not being a spendthrift—this “Scawtch” cautiousness having many side-humours. Harris used to tell me a good story. The Knight of Drury Lane liked a good rich wine at dinner, and on one of his visits *chez les Nicolinis* at the Château de Craig-y-Nos, there was a large dinner-party. Harris sat next to Nicolini, who passed him the claret decanter. “Chambertin—of the very best,” said the tenor, “but for goodness' sake don't pass it down!” “Why?” said Harris. “Oh, all the other fellows are drinking *ordinaire* at 12s. a dozen.”

Watching the procession of peers to the House of Lords *viâ* the stage-doors of the Musical Comedy Theatres, one is astonished at the number of foot-light favourites—or otherwise, who have ta-ra-ra-d and tiara-d themselves to fame—quite justifiably I admit. The blue-blood-must-join-blue-blood theory of course is long since dead, and, after all, many of the “sock and buskin” peeresses are above the average intelligence of the “Lady of Society” *eligible*.

The list is far from complete, but it may for all

purposes commence with the Duke of Cambridge and Miss Fairbrother. Then on to—

- 1882. Miss Leamar to the Hon. Mr. Duncombe (son of the Earl of Feversham).
 - 1885. Miss Edith Brandon (then at the Empire Theatre) to the Earl of Berkeley.
 - 1889. Miss Dolly Tester (a baker's daughter at Brighton, in the ballet at the local theatre under Mrs. Nye Chart) to the Marquis of Ailesbury.
 - 1889. Belle Bilton (daughter of an Aldershot Canteen Sergeant) and the fifth Earl of Clancarty.
 - 1892. Connie Gilchrist and the seventh Earl of Orkney.
 - 1893. Lidiana Maichle (known in Drury Lane Dramas as Madame Miska) and the third Baron Haldon.
 - 1901. Rosie Boote and the fourth Marquis of Headfort.
 - 1905. Anna Robinson and the fifth Earl of Rosslyn.
 - 1906. Eva Carrington and the twenty-fifth Baron de Clifford.
 - 1906. Stella Berridge and the Earl of Clonmel.
 - 1906. Frances Donnelly and the fifth Baron Ashburton.
 - 1906. Camille Clifford and the Hon. Henry Bruce, eldest son of Lord Aberdare.
 - 1907. Denise Orme and the Hon. Yarde-Buller, now Lord Churston.
 - 1908. Sylvia Storey (daughter of Fred Storey, actor, dancer, and scene-painter) and the seventh Earl Poulett, who had to wrestle his title from a presumptive organ-grinder.
 - 1911. Zena Dare (daughter of Mr. Justice Biggam's Clerk) and the Hon. R. Brett, son of Lord Esher.
- Delia Sinclair and Sir Charles Huntingdon.

Of course, in these days, when theatrical knights

are plentiful, "ladies" by courtesy are to be officially found among many actresses, but the list I give shows how far-reaching has been the social leavening since the days of old, when to "marry an actress" was considered to be the arrival at the lowest form of social mesalliance.

In fact, as I write, one of the only fears at an extravagant increase in the *personnel* of the House of Lords is that Mr. Geo. Edwardes would have seriously to increase his Gaiety Chorus to cope with the demand.

CHAPTER THE LAST

Drury Lane—The 1881 "Command" at Abergeldie—"Money" Command in 1911—Why it was selected—History of Drury Lane Theatre—William Davenant (1639) to Arthur Collins (1911)—Plays produced from Augustus Harris to Arthur Collins—Benefits—The "Command" performance—Official cast, etc.—His Majesty's letters of thanks—Mr Collins' account of the evening—The King and the R.A.'s pictures—"A pleasant surprise"—The German Emperor's song: "Wake up, England"—Possibility of strained relations—Various comments.

FOR reasons before explained, all references to Drury Lane Theatre in this book are merely episodic. Its great history must be left to a later period, whoever its Boswell may be. But certain topical references must be elaborated, and the 1911 epoch-making "Command" performance is a peg on which to hang many details of great interest.

A "Command" performance had not taken place in England since '58 or '59, and after the death of the Prince Consort in 1861, until Her Late Majesty, Queen Victoria, "commanded" Edgar Bruce's company, then in Scotland, to play Sir F. C. Burnand's "The Colonel" at Abergeldie Castle on Tuesday, October 4th, 1881. This unique occasion arose through the kind offices of the late King Edward. The cast included Edgar Bruce, C. W. Garthorne, Miss Glover, Miss Cissy Graham, etc. This fact was lost sight of in the recent plethora of historical detail written round the Drury Lane 1911 "Money" representation. Many reasons have been given as to why King George selected "Money"; but in so doing he must have had many an anxious

thought, apart from the fact that his Royal Grandmother, Queen Victoria, "commanded" "Money" on January 12th, 1854, at Windsor, by the Charles Keans from Drury Lane. Had he chosen a modern play, the Pineroites, Shavians, the Summerset-Maughams, and the various author factions would have all aroused a wail of jealousy too insuperable to be comfortable. "Money" is not a bad play of its kind—the King wanted it, got it, and stated that he liked it, and it has this one particular advantage; that most of all the theatrical somebodies, who were only nobodies in the 'Eighties, have at various times played the same parts for some charitable purpose other than that for which they enacted on May 17th, 1911, so to combine for a "Command" performance on the same lines of brotherly love that existed for a mere "Actor's Benefit" was quite an easy matter. One of the *dramatis personæ* suggested that the play should be advertised as "Money" or "When Knights were Bold," the cast including as it did Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Charles Wyndham and Sir John Hare.

The history of Drury Lane from 1617 to 1911 is chronologically interesting. As a mural record, the following is an exact copy now adorning the walls of Drury Lane Theatre. Great names adorn this list; Christopher Wren, Lord Byron, Colly Cibber, Kemble, David Garrick, down to Chatterton (who is said, erroneously, to have invented the "Shakespeare spelt ruin" maxim—it was really Boucicault who wrote it), Edmund Falconer, dramatist, whose "Peep o' Day Boys" will ever live, on to Augustus Harris and Arthur Collins, whose career is now so honourably crowned by his monarch's patronage. All other published and recorded references to Drury Lane have been merely fragmentary, or collections of actors' experiences which have very small interest outside the various theatrical coteries concerned. Therefore, I hope that this list will prove useful to those who from time to time may wish to make reference to these pages when thinking of what has always been and always will be "The National Theatre."

THE THEATRE ROYAL
DRURY LANE

“ WILLIAM DAVENANT (1639) TO ARTHUR COLLINS
(1911).

Royal Patent granted to William Davenant by Charles I.	1639
Royal Patent granted to William Davenant by Charles II.	1660
Sir Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant	1662
Sir Thomas Killigrew	1663-1680
(Rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren)	
C. Davenant and Alex. Davenant	1682
Alex. Davenant	1687
Richard Langley, Sir Thomas Skipworth, Wilks, Colley Cibber, and Estcourt	1703-1709
Barton Booth, Cibber, and Dogget	1713
Sir Richard Steele	1715
Crabbe, Wilks, and Booth	1732
Laurence Lacy	1744
David Garrick and Lacy	1747
(Reconstructed—Robert Adams, Architect)	
Richard Brinsley Sheridan	1776

(Rebuilt—Holland, Architect)

John Philip Kemble, Manager 1788-1796, 1800-1802
(Fourth rebuilt—Holland and Ben Wyatt,
Architects)

COMMITTEE OF RENTERS

Lord Byron, Chairman	
S. J. Arnold, Manager	1812
Robert William Elliston	1819-1826
Stephen Price	1827-1830
Alex. Lee	1831-1832
Alf Bunn	1835-1841
E. T. Smith	1852
Edmund Falconer	1862
Falconer and F. B. Chatterton	1863

F. B. Chatterton	1867-1879
Sir Augustus Harris	1879-1896
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Ltd. (Arthur Collins)	1896

Having shown the "managerial" history of the Lane, I will now give a list of its productions from the days of Augustus Harris to the present *régime*. The Renters were impossible people, and Harris was well rid of them in the 'Nineties, when their lease ended, and he was enabled to deal direct with the Duke of Bedford. The Renters were an Early Victorian example of debenture holders that held the lease and claimed possession nightly of a huge number of seats, had their own box-office keeper in attendance to admit and register them, and hampered the lease with dozens of impossible conditions, one of which was that the lessee could never remove any scenery from the theatre—even his own property—after it had been brought in. In the end their lease died out and their reign of terror came to an end—but not before Harris had given a term of hard labour to one of their "honoured brigade" who patronized the "Robinson Crusoe" pantomime season by using his own "Renter's stall" to go in with every night, and using somebody else's top coat to go out with. He used the same seat always, but used up six top coats before he was discovered. I only mention this unpleasant detail to show the calibre of some of the holders of this "script."

This brings us to a consideration of the drama output of the present building, which is (with various rebuildings) one hundred years old this year. The last two managements have established its records, and for the first time I will publish its repertoire, commencing with the Augustus Harris *régime*.

AUGUSTUS HARRIS MANAGEMENT

George Rignold's Season.

1879. "Henry V." (George Rignold), Shakespeare,
Novr. 1st; "Blue Beard" (Pantomime),

Augustus Harris' first, Bros. Grimm, E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 26th.

1880. "La Fille de Madame Angot," Ch. Lecocq, Mar. 29th; "Lady Audley's Secret," R. Roberts, Mar. 29th.

Miss Marie Litton's Season.

1880. "As You Like It," Shakespeare, May 13th; "The World," Merritt, Pettitt and A. Harris, July 31st; "Mother Goose" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 27th.
1881. "The World" (Revival), Merritt, Pettitt, and A. Harris, Mar. 14th, preceded by "The Stores," Bucalossi, Rose and A. Harris.

John M'Cullough's Season.

1881. "Virginus," Sheridan Knowles, April 25th; "Othello," Shakespeare, May 14th; Season of the Ducal Court Company of Saxe-Meiningen, May 30th; "Youth," P. Merritt and A. Harris, Aug. 6th; "Robinson Crusoe" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 26th.

Franke and Pollini's German Opera Season.

1882. "Lohengrin," Wagner, May 18th; "Die Fliegende Hollander," Wagner, May 20th; "Tannhäuser," Wagner, May 23rd; "Fidelio," Beethoven, May 24th; "Die Meistersingers," Wagner, May 30th; "Euryanthe," Weber, June 14th; "Tristan and Isolde," Wagner, June 20th.

Madame Ristori's Season

1882. "Macbeth," Shakespeare, July 3rd; "Elizabeth," Giacometti, July 14th; "Pluck," H. Pettitt and A. Harris, Aug. 5th; "Sindbad" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 26th.

The Carl Rosa English Opera Season.

1883. "Esmeralda," Goring Thomas, Mar. 26th; "Fidelio," Beethoven, Mar. 29th; "The Bohemian Girl," Balfe, Mar. 31st; "Trovatore," Verdi, April 3rd; "Maritana," Wallace, April 7th; "Colomba," Mackenzie, April 9th; "Faust," Gounod, April 10th; "Mignon," Ambroise Thomas, April 14th; "Youth" (Revival), P. Merritt and A. Harris, April 28th; "Freedom," G. F. Rowe and A. Harris, Aug. 4th; "The Opera Cloak," L. D. Powles and A. Harris, Septr. 8th; "A Sailor and his Lass," R. Buchanan and A. Harris, Octr. 15th; "Cinderella" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 26th.

Carl Rosa Opera Season.

1884. "Carmen," Bizet, April 15th; "Lucia di Lammermoor," Donizetti, April 19th; "Canterbury Pilgrims," Villiers Stanford, April 28th; "Haverley's Minstrels," May 31st; "The World," (Second Revival), Merritt, Pettitt and A. Harris, Septr. 11th; "Dick Whittington" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 26th.
1885. "Nadeshda," Goring Thomas, April 16th; "Manon," Massenet, May 7th; "Figaro," Mozart, May 30th; "A True Story," Eliot Galer, June 15th; "It's Never Too Late to Mend," Charles Reade, July 27th; "Human Nature," H. Pettitt and A. Harris, Septr. 12th; "Aladdin" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 26th.
1886. "Human Nature," (Revival), Pettitt and A. Harris, April 24th; Carl Rosa Season, May 31st; "Frivoli," Hervé and W. Beatty Kingston, June 29th; "A Run of Luck," Pettitt and A. Harris, Aug. 28th; Slaviansky's Russian Choir (Matinees), July 13th and July 17th; "The Forty Thieves" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard, Decr. 27th.

1887. Carl Rosa Opera Season, April 30th; Italian Opera Season, June 13th; "Pleasure," Paul Merritt and A. Harris, Septr. 3rd; "Nitocris" (Matinee), Clo Graves, Novr. 2nd; "Puss in Boots" (Pantomime), E. L. Blanchard. Decr. 26th.
1888. "A Run of Luck" (Revival), H. Pettitt and A. Harris, March 31st; "The Armada," H. Hamilton and A. Harris, Septr. 22nd; "The Babes in the Wood" (Pantomime, Dan Leno's first season), E. L. Blanchard, Harry Nicholls and A. Harris, Decr. 26th.
1889. "The Royal Oak," H. Hamilton and A. Harris, Septr. 23rd; "Jack and the Beanstalk," (Pantomime), H. Nicholls and A. Harris, Decr. 26th.
1890. Carl Rosa Opera Season, April 5th; "Paul Kauvar," Steele Mackay, May 12th; "Million of Money," H. Pettitt and A. Harris, Septr. 6th; "Beauty and the Beast" (Pantomime), W. Yardley and A. Harris, Decr. 26th.
1891. "It's Never Too Late to Mend" (Revival), Charles Reade, April 11th; "Formosa," (Revival), Dion Boucicault, May 26th; "Drink" (Revival), Charles Reade, June 23rd; "A Sailor's Knot," Henry Pettitt, Septr. 5th; "Humpty Dumpty" (Pantomime), H. Nicholls and A. Harris, Decr. 26th.
1892. German-Italian Opera (Extra to Covent Garden Performances), June 13th; "The Prodigal Daughter" (well-known racer, "Voluptuary" used), H. Pettitt and A. Harris, Septr. 17th; "Little Bo-Peep" (Pantomime), Wilton Jones and A. Harris, Decr. 26th.
1893. English Opera (Spring Season), April 3rd; Comedie Française Season, June 12th; Grand Opera (Extra Performances by Covent Garden Artistes), July 15th; "A Life of Pleasure" (Music by Glover), H. Pettitt and A. Harris, Septr. 21st; "Robin-

son Crusoe " (Pantomime, Augustus Harris' first great illness), H. Nicholls and A. Harris, Decr. 26th.

1894. English Opera (Matinees from April 14th to May 12th), March 24th; "Gentleman Jack" (James Corbett, Champion of the World) and W. A. Brady, April 21st; German Opera (Extra Performance by Covent Garden Artists), June 19th; "The Derby Winner" (Music by Glover), H. Hamilton, C. Raleigh and A. Harris, Sept. 15th; "Dick Whittington" (Pantomime), C. Raleigh, H. Hamilton, and A. Harris (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.

1895. English Opera (Spring Season), conducted by Glover, April 13th; Elenora Duse Season, Conducted by Glover, June 3rd; Saxe-Coburg Ducal Company, June 17th; "Cheer, Boys, Cheer" (Henry Russell present), C. Raleigh, A. Harris, and H. Hamilton (Music by Glover), Sept. 19th; "Cinderella" (Pantomime, Motor Car first used on the Stage to take Cinderella to Ball), C. Raleigh, A. Harris and A. Sturgess (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.

1896. English Opera Season, Conducted by Glover, April 4th; "Jo" (Jennie Lee), May 13th.

Sir Augustus Harris died June 22nd.

"Duchess of Coolgardie" (John Coleman's Season), Eustace Leigh and Cyril Clare, Sept. 19th; "Kiss of Delilah," Nov. 27th; "Aladdin" (Pantomime) (Management: Executors of Sir A. Harris and Oscar Barrett), A. Sturgess, Decr. 26th.

Arthur Collins' Management—First Season.

1897. "White Heather," C. Raleigh and H. Hamilton (Music by Glover), Sept. 16th; "Babes in the Wood" (Pantomime), Arthur Sturgess and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 27th.

1898. "White Heather" (Revival), May 12th; "The Great Ruby," C. Raleigh and H. Hamilton (Music by Glover), Septr. 15th; "The Forty Thieves" (Pantomime), Arthur Sturgess and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1899. "Hearts are Trumps," Cecil Raleigh (Music by Glover), Septr. 16th; "Jack and the Beanstalk" (Pantomime), Arthur Sturgess and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26.
1900. "Marsac of Gascony," E. Vroom (Music by Glover), April 21st; "Price of Peace," Cecil Raleigh (Music by Glover), Septr. 20th; "Sleeping Beauty and the Beast" (Pantomime), J. Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1901. "The Great Millionaire," Cecil Raleigh (Music by Glover), Septr. 19th; "Blue Beard" (Pantomime), J. Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1902. "Ben Hur" by General Lew Wallace (Klaw and Erlanger's Season), Dramatized by William Young, April 3rd; "The Best of Friends," Cecil Raleigh (Music by Glover), Septr. 18th; "Mother Goose" (Pantomime), J. Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1903. "Dante" by V. Sardou and H. Moreau—rendered into English by Laurence Irving (Sir Henry Irving's season), Music by Xavier Leroux, April 30th; "The Flood Tide," Cecil Raleigh (Music by Glover), Septr. 17th; "Humpty Dumpty" (Pantomime), J. Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1904. Moody Manners Opera Season, May 21st.

Theatre closed for Improvements—No Autumn Drama. Death of Herbert Campbell and Dan Leno.

"The White Cat" (Pantomime), J. Hickory

Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover),
Decr. 26th.

1905. Sir Henry Irving last season in London, April 29th; "The Prodigal Son," Hall Caine (Music by Glover), Septr. 7th; "Cinderella" (Pantomime—Fragson's first appearance), Sir F. C. Burnand, J. Hickory Wood, and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1906. "The Bondsman," Hall Caine (Music by Glover), Septr. 20th; "Sindbad," J. Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1907. "The Last of His Race," Donald MacLaren, May 18th; "The Sins of Society," Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton (Music by Glover), Septr. 12th; "The Babes in the Wood" (Pantomime), J. Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.

*Theatre closed for re-building on account of fire,
March 25th.*

1908. "The Marriages of Mayfair," Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton (Music by Glover), Septr. 21st; "Dick Whittington," J. H. Wood and Arthur Collins, Decr. 26th.
1909. Castellano Italian Opera Season, May 31st and June 28th; "The Whip," Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton (Music by Glover), Septr. 9th; "Aladdin" (Pantomime), Sir Francis Burnand, Hickory Wood and Arthur Collins (Music by Glover), Decr. 27th.
1910. "The Whip" (Revival), March 26th; "Jack and the Beanstalk" (Pantomime) (Music by Glover), Decr. 26th.
1911. "The Sins of Society" (Revival), March 30th.

BENEFITS

G. Rignold's Benefit ("Black-Eyed Susan"), 1879, Decr. 5th and 6th; Royal General Theatrical

Fund Benefit (Matinee), 1881, Feb. 28th; Charles Harcourt Memorial Fund Benefit, 1881, May 18th; William Holland's Benefit (Matinee), 1881, Decr. 7th; Benefit of Sam Hayes, 1882, May 14th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1883, Mar. 19th; Actors' Benevolent Fund (Matinee), 1884, May 29th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1884, April 3rd; A.B.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1884, June 19th; Benefit to F. B. Chatterton (Matinee), 1885, Mar. 4th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1885, Mar. 26th; Benefit to Lady Julius Benedict, whose husband wrote "The Lily of Killarney" (Matinee), 1885, June 23rd; William Creswick's Farewell, 1885, Octr. 29th; Harry Jackson's widow Benefit, 1885, Novr. 26th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1886, Mar. 4th; Benefit to Lionel Brough (Matinee), 1886, July 6th; Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Russell's Matinee, The Harmony and Expression of Motion, 1886, July 31st; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1887, April 21st; Charles Warner's Benefit (Matinee), 1888, June 7th; Mrs. Anna Conover's Benefit (Matinee), 1888, June 11th; Exhibition of Armada and Elizabethan Relics (in the Foyer), 1888, Octr. 4th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1889, April 11th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1890, Mar. 17th; Benefit to widow of E. L. Blanchard, 1890, June 2nd; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1891, April 23rd; Aged French Professor's Benefit (Matinee), 1891, June 30th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1892, Novr. 24th; Peterkin Opera Company ("Royalty") Benefit (Matinee), 1893, Sept. 28th; "Sun" Miners' Benefit (Matinee), 1893, Octr. 12th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinee), 1893, Decr. 4th; "Genoveva" Opera by Pupils of the Royal College of Music, 1893, Decr. 6th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinees), 1894, Novr. 15th; 1895, Novr. 28th; 1896, Novr. 12th; 1897, Novr. 18th; Nellie Farren Benefit (Matinee), 1898, Mar. 17th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinees), 1898, Novr. 17th; 1899, Novr. 21st; Boer War Matinee (Princess Christian), 1900, May 15th; Canadian Matinee (Ottawa Fire Disaster), 1900, June 19th; R.G.T.F. Benefit (Matinees), 1900, Novr. 27th; 1901, Novr. 21st; 1902, Novr. 20th; Actors' Association Matinee ("Merchant of Venice"), Cast

included Sir Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, etc., etc., 1903, July 14th; Ellen Terry Jubilee (Matinee), 1906, June 12th; Lord Mayor's Cripples Fund (Matinee), 1907, Mar. 5th; Davos Sanatorium Matinee, 1909, May 11th.

Following the legitimate season from March 30th we come to the 17th May, 1911, when His Majesty the King, George V., "commanded" "Money" by Lord Bulwer Lytton. Here is the official programme :—

G. R.

DRURY LANE THEATRE ROYAL

Managing Director, Arthur Collins.

By the Gracious Command of

HIS MAJESTY THE KING

in Honour of the Visit of their Imperial Majesties
THE GERMAN EMPEROR AND THE GERMAN
EMPRESS

Wednesday Evening, May 17th, at Nine o'clock,
His Majesty's Servants will perform

MONEY

By Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton.
Under the direction of Mr. Arthur Collins.

The play produced by Sir Squire Bancroft.

Lord Glossmore	.	.	.	Mr. Fred Terry.
Sir John Vesey	.	.	.	Mr. John Hare.
Sir Frederick Blount	.	.	.	Mr. Cyril Maude.
Captain Dudley Smooth	.	.	.	Sir Chas. Wyndham.
Mr. Graves	.	.	.	Sir Herbert Tree.
Mr. Stout	.	.	.	Sir Herbert Tree.
Alfred Evelyn	.	.	.	Mr. Geo. Alexander.
Mr. Sharp	.	.	.	Mr. Laurence Irving.
An Old Member of the Club				Mr. Alfred Bishop.

Sir John Vesey's Servant	Mr. Lewis Waller.
Token	Mr. Edmund Maurice.
Mr. Flat	Mr. Chas. Hawtrey.
Mr. Green	Mr. Sydney Valentine.
Frantz	Mr. Wheedon Grossmith.
Tabouret	Mr. J. H. Barnes.
Grab	Mr. James Fernandez.
MacFinch	Mr. Charles Rock.
MacStucco	Mr. Norman Forbes.
Crimson	Mr. Don Boucicault.
Patent	Mr. Dennis Eadie.
Kite	Mr. J. D. Beveridge.
The Old Club Servant .	Mr. Edward Terry.
Lady Franklin	Miss Winifred Emery.
Georgina Vesey	Miss Alexandra Carlisle.
Clara Douglas	Miss Irene Vanbrugh.

Club Members, Servants, Waiters : Messrs. Oscar Adye, Henry Ainley, Marsh Allen, Allan Aynsworth, George Barrett, Murray Carson, Vincent Clive, Frank Collins, W. Devereux, Kenneth Douglas, H. De Lange, Gerald du Maurier, H. V. Esmond, George Graves, Lyn Harding, Rudge Harding, Luigi Lablache, Robert Loraine, C. M. Lowne, Norman McKinnell, Austin Melford, Dawson Milward, Harry Nicholls, Robert Pateman, Harry Paulton, Fred Penley, Arthur Playfair, Arthur Poole, Frederick Ross, Howard Russell, C. Aubrey Smith, C. W. Somerset, Sam Southern, E. Lyall Swete, Herbert Warren.

Assistant Stage Managers, E. D'Auban and E. V. Reynolds.

Musical Director, J. M. Glover.

Business Manager, Sidney Smith.

Doors open at 7.30. The audience is requested to be seated at 8.30, as the curtain will rise at 9. Ordinary evening dress to be worn in all reserved parts of the theatre. Amphitheatre (unreserved) 5s.

The result is best described in His Majesty's own words—I quote from the Royal record in the next day's papers—Letter from Sir William Carrington, the King's Privy Purse Secretary :—

“ Privy Purse Office,
“ Buckingham Palace,
“ May 18th, 1911.

“ DEAR MR. COLLINS,

“ I have received the King's commands to assure you on his behalf and on behalf of the German Emperor, of the German Empress, and of the Queen, that their Majesties sincerely congratulate you upon last night's triumph at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

“ His Majesty asks you kindly to convey his own and their Majesties' warm thanks to Mr. Ernest D'Auban, your stage-manager, and his assistants, to your Secretary, Mr. R. H. Lindo, and those who are with him, to Mr. James Glover and his fine orchestra, to Mr. R. McCleery, your scenic artist and his colleagues, and to one and all of your other employees for the invaluable assistance they so admirably and readily rendered.

“ Their Majesties were much struck with the beauty of the decorations of the theatre, which formed a splendid setting worthy of the scene. Perhaps you will be so good as to inform Messrs. Maple and Co. to this effect.

“ A hearty and loyal combination of art, of skill, of experience, and of energy, brought about this memorable representation of Lord Lytton's comedy of 'Money,' a performance which, in the opinion of the King, will ever stand out high and bright in the long and honourable annals of the British stage.

“ I remain, dear Mr. Collins,

“ Yours very truly,

“ (Signed) WILLIAM CARRINGTON

“ Arthur Collins, Esq.

“ Theatre Royal,

“ Drury Lane, W.C.”

Could greater or more graceful testimony be paid to any manager than this charming message from the King? It was an occasion of interest, incident, and national importance. A subsequent letter was written to Mr. Sidney Smith, the business manager, also thanking him in the name of the King.

The two Kings and their suite arrived at 9 o'clock sharp, and the German Empress and Queen Mary were presented with two bouquets by Mrs. Arthur Collins, and it might be interesting to quote the Drury Lane manager's own account of the evening.

"The Royal party then proceeded through the 'rotunda' to the foot of the grand staircase, the King remarking, 'What beautiful flowers! What lovely decorations!' As we reached the staircase, Mrs. Collins, who was even more nervous than myself, presented Queen Mary and the German Empress with bouquets, Mr. Lindo, our Secretary, assisting her. Then I led the party to their seats in the Royal box, in which I placed electric bells communicating with the stage, so that I could signal to the orchestra to play the National Anthem immediately on the arrival of the King and his guests. During the interval, after the Club Scene, His Majesty and the German Emperor proceeded to the Grand Saloon, which had been converted into a retiring-room, and there inspected the sketches which had been made for the new act-drop. They both did me the honour to express themselves as being immensely interested in and struck by the manner in which all the details had been so carefully prepared. After the curtain had finally fallen, as the members of the Royal party were putting on their overcoats and wraps, the Emperor observed, 'I understood "Money" was an old comedy, but it certainly does not strike me as at all old. I have never seen better acting.' The King and Queen again congratulated me, the former mentioning that the new act-drop had taken everybody completely by surprise. 'There, your Majesty,' I replied, 'is Mr. Seymour Lucas, who is responsible for the design.' The King at once turned and cordially shook

hands with the eminent R.A., complimenting him on his work, and presenting him to the German Emperor.

"At the carriage door there were more congratulations and more hand-shakings. In the most charming way possible, the Prince of Wales and Princess Victoria Louise also expressed their high appreciation of the evening's entertainment."

By the time the Royal visitors had arrived ten thousand and twenty-seven pounds worth of ticket holders had been booked. And what a house! A huge glitter of diamonds—of jewels—of beauties! The Rue de la Paix, Bond Street and Hatton Garden let loose in brilliants! Paquin and Worth at their best in costumes! The entire Debrett and Burke in peerage, finance, the Stock Exchange, painting music and the higher drama; all present to extend a cheer to the Royal German Emperor over here for the unveiling of the Queen Victoria memorial. As the Royal Party entered "God Save the King"—the melody which serves as the National Anthem for both nations, England and Germany—rang through the house, and all was quiet till a volcanic burst of applause announced the discovery of the new and very beautiful act-drop, from the design of Seymour Lucas, R.A., which had been painted by R. C. McCleery from original studies by Miss Kemp Welch, the famous horse-painter, allegorically treated in the Italian style. In the centre the German Emperor and King George on horseback were represented as meeting and saluting one another. At the side of the Emperor stood Germania and opposite—the figure of Britannia, near H.M. the King. Overhead floated Peace decorating the two monarchs with laurel wreaths. The lower part of this background represents an idealized view of London in the distance, with St. Paul's in the centre. In the foreground young girls were seen scattering flowers of greeting in front of the Emperor on his white steed. This was a triumph in itself, as the King afterwards remarked, and "took him quite by surprise." The evening was one huge success—not

a single hitch, not a solitary defect. "Roses—roses—all the way," as Robert Browning sings.

For my own part in this memorable ceremony, it was purely administrative. There was no distinctive music to be played in "Money," but I managed to gain some individuality in the process. In the first place I scored the German Emperor's own "Song of Aegir," and as the newspapers had it the next day: "The German Emperor seemed highly pleased, and bowed twice to Mr. Glover and the band." The Emperor has a nephew at school at Bexhill, so I got the nephew and his tutor, Dr. Blassneck, to do me an English version.

But an amusing *contretemps* arose. It may be remembered that when King George, as Prince of Wales, returned from Australia some years ago, his first words at a Guildhall Banquet, speaking in defence of English commerce, were: "Wake up, England!" and I had also heard that our "Sailor King" had a preference for nautical ditties, so I arranged a special maritime selection, and called it "Wake up, England." I really had no idea of any topical application—merely a sort of reminiscence, but in the arrangement of the programme, which arose in the office away from serious thought, it came out and was sent to the Press like this:

1. "Song of Aegir"—H.I.M. The German Emperor
2. "Wake up, England"—J. M. Glover

I admit the juxtaposition was unfortunate but unforeseen, Morocco was not even then thought of, so I quietly bowed to an avalanche of anonymous letters, which the first newspaper publication of the programme brought me, and changed the title of the selection to "Songs of Britain." One of the "anonymous" protests, however, was humorous, so I will quote it in full:—

"Are not the relations between England and Germany sufficiently strained without their being accentuated by your impertinent pantomime humour?"

Shades of "The Skibbereen Eagle" and the Czar of Russia. As for the performance itself, it had many special and exceptional attributes, which I will tabulate.

1. The early door people—a boy scout and an eighty-three year old first-nighter—a Mrs. Davies—arrived at 10.30 a.m. the day previous—thirty hours in advance. This was the early door "record." Up to this time it had been held by the Nellie Farren Benefit; "waiters" who formed their *queue* at 11.30 the night previous—for a performance which did not start till 1.30 p.m. the following day.

2. It took four hundred policemen to keep the crowd off, to watch the light-fingered gentry, and generally govern those whose business is outside the theatre.

3. So many leading London actors took part, that on the night in question three London theatres had to close. The costumes (Early Victorian) for the one night cost £800, and each actor received a present of his own outfit as a memento of the occasion.

4. The added ages of those actors in the cast proper came to 1544. This, without the Club Scene volunteers.

5. Drury Lane Theatre had to be closed for three nights to admit of the scheme of decoration being carried out. His Majesty the King considerably asked that every one should be paid for closed nights, which was done.

6. The night receipts were the biggest on record—£10,027; of this a matter of £3000 odd profit was sent to three of the Theatrical Charities.

7. Every name—except the unreserved—had been submitted to Scotland Yard and Buckingham Palace, before the first performance, so that with the exception of the galleryites the police were in touch with every person in the house.

8. Fifty detectives, fifty special firemen, and fifty commissionaires permeated every corner of the theatre, the first with a view to pickpockets, the second to ensure safety from fire, and the third to

ensure efficient attendant administration. During the rehearsals the L.C.C. officials tried, with lighted matches, to set fire to the hangings of the Royal box—and the band at the time was rehearsing a selection called “Nero.”

In the saloon used as a retiring-room by the Royalties and guests, the original studies of the figures on the act-drop were exhibited on eight easels; at the extreme end of the room being shown King George, and facing him the Emperor, while frames on other easels were filled by Britannia, Germania, Peace, the horses, etc. The large polished mahogany board on the wall, recording the names of the previous managers and patent holders of the National Theatre, which has been reproduced in this chapter, was faced with a duplicate tablet, giving the cast of “Money” at this performance, with other particulars about all concerned in the production, forming a very handsome addition to the permanent decoration of the fine room, in addition to being a very interesting record for playgoers of the future.

For purposes of record only, I append the musical programme of this wonderful night:—

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC.

Under the Direction of Mr. James M. Glover
[Before Royalty arrived]

Selection—“A Day in Naples” G. W. Byng
“The National Anthem”

Piece—“Songs of Britain” J. M. Glover
Valse—“The Chocolate Soldier”

Strauss

Selection—“The Quaker Girl” Lionel Monckton
Two Pieces (a)—“In the Shadows”

Herman Finck

(b)—“Nero” S. Coleridge-Taylor
“God Save the King.”

Thus ended a great night. It had many points of humour, of pride for those who organized its

success, and was the source of many a quip and jape between the great actors who played the small parts.

One growl only. On the day of the performance many people besought the management to allow them the courtesy of viewing the decorations. This favour was granted, and favoured ones came, saw, and started purloining from the Royal box the valuable souvenirs already laid out for Royalty. Was ever such ingratitude? Was ever such unjustifiable theft! Again, in the evening many highly dressed dames and their cavaliers—people who had paid ten guineas for their stalls—remained after the departure and stripped each stall of its posies—part of the decorations which the management were reserving for promised exhibition in future performances. Another lady, with enough diamonds visible to stock a Bond Street jeweller's, went round the stairs, and in my presence collected six of the souvenir programmes and hid them under her cloak. We talk about the curio-hunting American and his petty souvenir vandalisms, but after this America takes a back seat. One more incident in connection with the performance. I had arranged to do a magazine page for an important Daily on the morning of the 17th—the central piece to be the German Emperor's song, the rest scraps of melodies written and composed by other Royalties—Henry VI., Henry VIII., Charles II., Marie Antoinette, Louis XIII., and Princess Beatrice of Battenberg. To make sure of copyright, I had a wire sent to the German Emperor's publisher in Berlin for permission. This they refused, and I saw a dilemma. Nothing daunted, I said, "What's the matter with the composer, H.I.M. Buckingham Palace?" and so off we wired and the consent came back, "With pleasure."

And now I think that this book of a life's *olla podrida* must finish. A record of the great "Command" night at Drury Lane fittingly brings it to an end. I have endeavoured to make it interesting. "Reminiscences" are inclined to be egotistical—they are inclined to be dull in their

iteration—and they are inclined to be too personal and esoteric. For this reason I have carefully, here and there, interspersed the various “*on dits*” or quips with matters of general criticism, comment, and opinions.

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